















# THE COMEDY

OF

✓  
DANTE ALIGHIERI

TRANSLATED BY

PATRICK BANNERMAN, ESQ.



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HELL



# THE VISION OF DANTE

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## Hell

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### CANTO I.

HALF through our mortal life, myself I found  
In a dark forest's wild and rugged ground,  
Where the right way was lost in shaggy wood,  
A rude and savage woodland solitude.  
The very thought still robs me of my breath,  
And memory counts it little less than death :  
Of good to treat, discovered in the wood,  
I'll tell of other things I understood.  
When the true way was lost, the path forsook,  
Of sleep so deep that moment I partook  
That how I entered I can scarce relate,  
So dull the slumber and so dead its weight.  
But when the mountain's feet my steps drew near  
That closed the vale that filled my heart with fear,  
Upward I looked, and saw its shoulders bright

Already with that planet's rays of light  
That guides all others through each path aright.  
The fear was then subsiding into rest  
That shook the placid depth within my breast,  
All the night long so saddened and perplexed.  
Like one who breathless issues from the waves  
Turns to the waters he no longer braves,  
My spirit, that still flies, turns back to see  
The pass that living man ne'er trod but me.  
My weary frame once more refreshed, I paced  
The way along the desert ridge, and traced—  
The hindmost footstep ever deepest placed.  
And, lo ! just where the steep ascents begin,  
A light swift leopard with a spotted skin  
Appeared : never for once he left my view,  
As if he meant t' impede my journey through,  
That twice or thrice I from the path withdrew.  
The sun was mounting, with those stars that high  
Companioned with him when the heavenly love  
First moved those things so beautiful above.  
The hour of time, sweet season of the day,  
Made me hope better of the beast of prey,  
With variegated skin, that caused my stay.  
But so that terror might not leave me quite,  
A lion there appeared within my sight,  
With lofty head and raging famine's flame,  
The very air was trembling as he came—  
And in its leanness full of each desire,  
She-wolf that saddened nations with its ire.  
This creature put me in such painful plight,  
Assailed with fear that issued from its sight,



It made me lose the hope to gain the height.  
And such are they who with good will acquire,  
And time rends from them all their heart's desire,  
And tears and sadness every thought inspire.  
So did the beast to me that knows not peace—  
Advancing step by step, retreat commands  
To where the solitary silent stands.  
In the low ground I mused—my eyes beheld  
Whose speech long silence had in part congealed.  
“Have pity upon me,” to him I cried,  
In the great desert when I saw that one,  
“Who e'er thou art, or shape or mortal man.”  
“Not man. I once was man : my parent's earth,  
Lombardy—both Mantuans by their birth.  
Born under Julius, though it might be late,  
Under the good Augustus lived I, in the day  
When false and lying gods still held the sway.  
Poet I was—of that just hero sung  
Who came from Troy, Anchises' youthful son  
After they had burned superb Ilion.  
But thou, why thus return where cares annoy,  
Nor climb delightful hill without alloy ?”  
“Art thou that Virgil, then, that fountain-head,  
River of speech that spreads so far and wide ?”  
To him with shame-clad forehead I replied.  
“Honour and light of other poets, see  
Long love and zeal that made me think of thee,  
To find thy volume justly prized by me.  
Thou art my master and mine author—none  
Else but thee alone ; and I have ta'en from thee  
The beauteous style for which they honour me.”

I saw the beast that made me turn, and said—  
“ Help me, thou famous wise one ! I entreat,  
From her who makes my veins and pulses beat.”  
“ Another road it is for thee to take,”  
Replied he, when he saw my weeping state,  
“ If thou wouldst issue from this wooded brake.  
The beast for which you utter such a cry  
Suffers none else to pass her way, and will  
Obstruct so far their passage as to kill :  
Of nature so malignant to the core,  
Insatiate hungers, ever longs for more ;  
And after eating hungrier than before.  
With many animals does she unite,  
And many more, until the greyhound gain  
Sight of the beast, and make her die with pain.  
Nor earth nor metal will his hunger move ;  
But he will feed on wisdom, virtue, love,  
Within the Feltros, where his nation lies.  
Of that humble Italy the safety he,  
For which the swift virgin died—Camilla,  
Euryalus, Turnus, Nisus, of their wounds.  
Chase her he will through every town, until  
Replaced once more, and there constrained to dwell,  
In place from whence she first departed—hell.  
Thou wilt follow me, and I will be thy guide—  
’Tis for thy sake, I think I can discern.  
From hence I’ll lead thee through the place alone,  
Where thou shalt hear the desperate shrieks, and see  
The Antique Spirits in their misery—  
Upon the second death they all will cry.  
Thou’lt see the souls contented in the fire—

Of those whom hope howe'er can still inspire,  
The hope to join the happy nations' choir.  
And when to them ascending in desire,  
With one I'll leave thee when my steps retire ;  
A worthier soul for this thou wilt require.  
Because I was rebellious to his laws,  
His who commands and reigns—by his decree  
No soul his city must approach by me :  
In every part commands, and there he reigns,  
There is his city and his lofty throne—  
Happy he whom there he chooses for his own !”  
And I : “Lead me, O poet ! I request,  
By that God whom thou hast not, can'st not know—  
That I may 'scape the great and greater woe—  
Now lead me to the place which thou hast said,  
So that Saint Peter's portal I may see,  
And those you make so very sad to be.”  
Then he moved on, and I kept right behind.

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## CANTO II.

THE day advancing, and the deep brown air,  
Recalled earth's creatures from their toils of care ;  
And I alone was girding for the war,  
Both of the journey and of their piteous star  
Which he who pictures will not wander far.  
O Muses, O exalted Genius, aid !  
O Mind ! that wittest what I saw, be near !—

Here let thine own nobility appear.  
Poet that guidest me ! think you, you can trust  
The lofty passage to my feet of dust ?  
Silvius' son, corruptible, you say,  
Paid th' immortal visit sensibly.  
Of every ill the adversary he,  
Courteous, and musing on the high effect  
T' issue from him, who and of what respect,  
Nor yet unworthy man of intellect,  
That he was chosen in empyreal heaven,  
Rome and its empire by the Father given.  
Then how and why, if one would tell the truth,  
Were they established in that station, where  
Sits the successor to a greater chair ?  
But this same journey, the renown you gave,  
The things he learned, in some sort might bestow  
His victory and the papal mantle too.  
Afterward went he, the chosen vessel called  
Faith, to comfort by his high translation—  
Faith, first step to the way of salvation.  
But I—why came I ? and who gave me leave ?  
Æneas I am not, Paul I am not :  
Nor I, nor others, could the thought conceive  
That I should honour such as this receive.  
Should I abandon it, I fear 'twill seem  
That my first coming was a foolish dream.  
Like one unwilling for the thing he wills,  
Whose second thoughts have made his purpose pale,  
And everything upon the threshold fail ;  
So did I with myself obscure that coast  
With thinking much—the enterprise gave o'er

With vehemence I had embraced before.  
“If well I understand your speech,” replied  
The shade of the Magnanimous, “your soul,  
Hurt with vile cowardice, is in the toil  
The which our nature often will embroil—  
From honoured enterprise the mind recall,  
Like a false bugbear, when the shadows fall.  
To free thy spirit from entangling fear,  
I’ll tell thee why I came, and what was told  
The instant, for thy sorrow to unfold.  
Among the souls I was who hang between :  
A lady called me, blest and beautiful.  
Asked her commands—for brighter than the star  
Her eyes were shining, which is seen afar.  
In her sweet tongue th’ angelic voice began :—  
‘ Oh, courteous Spirit of the Mantuan !  
‘ Thy fame still lasts amid the world—thy song,  
‘ As far as motion goes, shall time prolong !  
‘ A friend of mine, and not of Fortune’s now,  
‘ Within the desert plain, obstruction near,  
‘ That in his journey he has turned for fear.  
‘ From what I heard in heaven, to my belief  
‘ I was too late in rising to relief.  
‘ Now move, and with thy speech adorned, and what  
‘ Is suitable to save from danger’s hold,  
‘ Assist him, so that I may be consoled.  
‘ I am Beatrice that tells thee to depart ;  
‘ I come from place to which I wish to go :  
‘ As love has moved me, I have spoken so.  
‘ When I am in the presence of my Lord,  
‘ To him thy praises I shall oft record.’



Silent was she. Afterwards I began :—

‘ Lady of worth—by whom, to human kind,  
‘ That heaven of lesser circles can present  
‘ The blessing that surpasseth all content—  
‘ So grateful thy commandment to my mind,  
‘ That, were’t already done, it were too slow  
‘ To obey the purpose, not the motive know.  
‘ But tell me how and why you can descend  
‘ To this low centre here, nor passage mourn  
‘ From that wide place to which your wishes turn.’  
‘ I will tell it thee,’ briefly she replied,  
‘ Since you have such an inbred wish to know  
‘ Wherefore I fear not entering here below.  
‘ What causeth ill we ought to fear alone :  
‘ The things that have the power should nourish dread,  
‘ But others no—not terrible indeed.  
‘ So formed am I, and such is God’s reward,  
‘ Unfelt thy misery and thy settled bourne,  
‘ Nor flames assail me that around me burn.  
‘ There is a gentle lady, now in heaven,  
‘ This stop I’ve charged thee with laments, with love,  
‘ That breaks the sentence that has passed above.  
‘ In her demand for Lucia, called this one,  
‘ And said, “ He, thy faithful, needs thy pity :  
“ A prey to hinderance and anxiety,  
“ I recommend his piteous case to thee.”  
‘ Enemy to cruelty, Lucia, moved,  
‘ Came to the place where sedentary we,  
‘ I was, and antique Rachel was with me.  
‘ Said, “ Beatrice, unblemished praise of God !  
“ Succour you not him who loves to such degree,

“ Who issued from the vulgar rank by thee ?  
“ Hear’st not the piercing note of his complaint ?  
“ See’st not his foe ?—hear’st not the battle-cry,  
“ On river that the sea can not outvie ?”  
‘ The world has never found a soul so prompt  
‘ To follow interest, or from loss to fly,  
‘ As, after she had said these words, was I—  
‘ Down hither came, and left my happy seat.  
‘ I trusted to thy honoured speech, which all  
‘ Who once have heard it will an honour call.’  
Reasoned thus with me, and, when ’twas o’er,  
Towards me her brilliant eyes in tears she turned,  
And I have come the quicker that she mourned.  
I came to thee her message to obey ;  
Found thee, withdrew thee from the wild beast’s stay,  
Who stopp’d thee climbing the delightful way.  
What is the matter ? why do you remain ?  
Why is there in thy heart that vicious spot ?  
Ardour and frankness wherefore have ye not ?  
Is’t not enough that blessed ladies three,  
I’ the court of heaven, are so intent on thee,  
And so much good my speech hath promised thee ?”  
As closed bent flowrets by nocturnal frost,  
Soon as they’re bleaching in the morning sun  
On stalk erect are opening every one,  
So dealt I with my stagnant spirit’s fear :  
Such noble courage through my heart there ran,  
I spoke like a frank person, and began,—  
“ How great the pity to my succour came !  
And thou, how courteous to convey so soon  
The true expressions of her messaged boon !

My heart thou hast disposed to the desire  
To go on ; so much, with these words of thine,  
That I am turned unto my first design.  
Now go, and let one will possess us both ;  
Thou art my leader, lord, and master, thou.”  
Thus spoke I to him, and he motioned hath—  
I entered by the lofty wooded path.

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## C A N T O   I I I.

“ THROUGH me the way into the sad city—  
Through me the way into eternal grief—  
Through me to nations lost without relief.  
Justice it was that moved my Maker high,  
The power divine of Architect above,  
The highest wisdom and the earliest love.  
The things of time were not before me, and  
’Mid eternal eternally I stand.  
All you that enter must leave hope behind.”  
These words of colour dark, obscure I saw  
Written upon the summit of a gate.  
“ Hard is their meaning, master, to relate.”  
Like prudent person then he answered me,  
“ Here from your mind let all suspicion fly,  
And every cowardice within you die ;  
We’re at the place I told you of before.  
The sorrying nations shall thine eyes behold,  
Who lost the gift of intellect of old.”

And afterwards his hand in mine he placed  
With joyful confidence that comfort gave,  
And turned the key of secrets like the grave.  
And then the sighs, complaints, and loud, loud groans  
Resounding through the air without a star,  
Began to wring my heart with many a tear.  
Diverse the tongues and language horrible,  
The words of sorrow and accents of ire—  
High and weak voices—sound of smiting there  
A tumult made, that seemed t' encompass all  
Within that air, which colourless expands  
For aye, as when the whirlwinds raise the sands.  
And I that had my head with error bound  
Addressed him—"Master, what is that I hear,  
Nations so vanquished in the woe appear?"  
And he replied—"This miserable lot  
Possess the souls of those whose living days  
Passed not with infamy, nor yet with praise.  
Immingled are they in the caitiff choir  
Of neutral angels, for themselves that stood—  
Neither rebelled nor loyal were to God.  
The heavens have chased them, for they'd sully heaven—  
The infernal depths receive them not, because  
No glory can the wicked have by those."  
And I, "Master, what is the thing so grievous  
To them, which makes them to lament so strong?"  
"I'll tell thee," he replied—"twill not be long.  
No hope have they of death to come ;  
And their blind life is base to such degree,  
By them each other's lot can envied be.  
Fame leaves no trace behind them in the world ;

Mercy and Justice both disdain their case.  
Let us not talk of them—one glance and pass.”  
And I that looked beheld a standard wave,  
Rapidly whirling, to such speed attain,  
That every pause it seemeth to disdain.  
Behind it such a troop of people came,  
My mind the thought could scarce o’ertake,  
A death so great could such a crowd unmake.  
I looked, the shade of him I recognised,  
Whose sad refusal cowardice advised.  
Incontinently saw I, and understood,  
That these belonged unto that caitiff sect  
God and his enemies alike neglect.  
Quarrelsome these no longer in the life :  
Yet were these naked creatures all o’erstung  
With wasps and hornets that about them clung.  
Irrigated their faces were with blood,  
Which, mixed with tears, descended to the ground,  
And bathed the feet that reptiles gathered round.  
Once and again I looked, and then I saw,  
At a great river’s brink, a nation stand ;  
And so said, “ Master, can I comprehend  
Who, what they are, and why should custom make  
Such seem so prompt their passage to o’ertake,  
As I discern through light that’s scarce awake ?”  
And he to me, “ These things are to be told,  
When once our footsteps shall have closed upon  
The River Sorrowful of Acheron.”  
Then, with ashamed and downcast eyes, I went—  
Afraid to speak would trouble him once more,  
I spoke not till we reached the river shore.



And lo ! towards us, came one in a bark,  
Whose head with hoar antiquity was white,  
Cried " Woe ! Ye wicked souls, no more for heaven,  
I come to lead you to yon other hold—  
Darkness eternal, and to hot and cold !"  
And thou that standest there—thou living soul—  
Depart from these standing here, who are dead !"  
He saw that I did not depart, and said,  
" Through other ways, through other gates, for thee  
The plain to see, and not to pass by this,  
Nor ought a lighter bark the freight to miss."  
The leader to Charon :—" Vex not thyself :  
Such is the will of Him, whose dwelling 's where  
He can do what he wills. Question forbear."  
Here, then, were tranquillised the woolly cheeks,  
That pilot of the livid marsh attire,  
Within whose eyes were wheels of flaming fire.  
But those, the feeble and the naked souls,  
Seemed to change colour, and to gnash their teeth,  
Soon as the cruel accents left his breath :  
Blasphemed their God, their parents, human kind ;  
The time when, the hour, the natal earth,  
The seed of their begetting, and their birth.  
Then all withdrew, who there together were,  
Loudly lamenting, to the wicked shore,  
Awaiting those who feared not God before.  
Charon, demon, with his eyes of burning coal,  
By signs collects them all, as in a bag,  
Beats with his oar whoever seems to lag.  
Like leaves in autumn lifted from the tree,  
The one that's next the other, till the bough

Has all its spoils restored to earth below ;  
In like manner, the ill seed of Adam  
Threw them from the beach one by one ; and all  
By signs, like falcon at its master's call—  
So went they o'er the face of the brown wave.  
Ere they had landed on the other bank,  
Already on the near new musters rank,  
“ My son,” said the courteous master, “ ’tis here,  
In the wrath of heaven, that those who die  
Assemble, all from every different sky.  
Divine Justice, that spurs them to the goal,  
And changes fear to wishes in their soul ;  
No worthy soul can ever pass by this.  
Of thee has Charon reason to complain—  
Well may you know henceforward by his strain.”  
When this was o’er, the darksome plain trembled  
So strong, that, with the terror of its weight,  
The mind still bathes the body in its sweat.  
The land, that’s ever tearful, gave a wind ;  
That lightning with vermillion splendour shone,  
Which conquer’d every feeling but its own :  
I fell like man whom sleep has seized upon.

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## CANTO IV.

BROKE the deep slumber that was in my head,  
A thunder-peal its influence to shake,  
Left me like person that is forced to wake.

My eye that had reposed around I moved,  
Rising to right, with fixed regard to see  
And know the very place where I might be.  
'Tis true I found me on the utmost verge  
Of the Valley of Sorrowful Abyss,  
Receiving sounds of infinite distress.  
Obscure it was, profound and cloudy, so  
That bottom to the gulf I could not spy,  
Nor anything discerned I with mine eye.  
"Down to the blinded world let us descend,"  
The poet 'gan, appalled and weaken'd ;  
"I shall go first, and you will be second."  
I, that perceived his colour changing, said—  
"How shall I ? see ! your spirit has declined,  
Wont to give comfort to my doubting mind."  
And he, "The anguish of the nations here,  
Who are below, has painted in my face  
Compassion's self, where fear you think you trace :  
Let us proceed, the long way urges it."  
So he moved, and made me enter in  
The first circle which is the abyss within.  
Here was no sound, to any listener's ear,  
Of loud complaint, but frequent sighs of care,  
Which made to tremble the eternal air.  
It happened thus, from grief of torments void,  
Possessing crowds beyond our sight and ken,  
Of infants, and of women, and of men.  
The good master said, "You do not ask me  
What are these spirits which you now descry—  
Wouldst thou discover, ere we yet draw nigh ?  
These have not sinn'd, though merit they should have—

'Tis not enough, for baptism they have none,  
A portion of the faith you also own :  
They lived ere Christianity began ;  
The God of heaven adored not as they ought.  
And of these here, I'm also in the fault  
For these defects : for other evil none  
Are lost,—afflicted only thus so far :  
Live in desire, but want hope's bright'ning star.”  
Great sorrow seized my heart to understand  
The reason why ; and when I came to know  
Race of much worth suspended in such woe :  
“ Tell me, O master mine !—tell me, signor !”  
I said from wish to make assurance sure  
Of that faith which vanquishes all error—  
“ Have any issued by their own merit,  
Or that of others, and attained to bliss ?”  
My covert speech he understood by this.  
Replied : “ I was new in this state you see,  
When I beheld a powerful one come down  
With sign of victory upon his crown ;  
The shade of our first parent hence he drew—  
Of his son Abel, Noah, Moses, too,  
Who was both lawgiver and obedient :  
The patriarch Abraham, David king ;  
Israel with his father and children,  
And with Rachel, for whom so much did he ;  
And many besides, and made them happy.  
And I would have this truth by you received,  
Until then were not human spirits saved.”  
We left not journeying while yet we spoke,  
But still passed along all the forest through—

Forest I call those spirits thickening crew.  
Our way, as yet, had not been long from where  
The summit was, when I beheld a fire  
Conquering the clouds of this dark hemisphere.  
Along we wandered still a little space,  
But not so much that I could not discern  
That honoured race inhabited that bourne.  
“Thou that each art and science can adorn,  
What souls are these such honour hems around,  
In different manner, with a separate bound?”  
And he to me: “This honourable renown  
They have that echoes through your life’s expanse,  
Acquires a grace in heaven for their advance.”  
In the meanwhile, a voice was heard by me—  
“Honour the poet of sublimity;  
His shadow returns, which had departed.”  
After the voice was ceased, the echoes dumb,  
Four great shadows I saw before me come;  
Their countenance was neither sad nor gay.  
The good master began to me to say:  
“The one with sword in hand, behold, admire,  
Who comes before the three as if their sire—  
That is Homer, the sovereign bard of all;  
The other Horace satirist recall;  
Ovid the third, and Lucan last of all.”  
“It was because that each agreed with me,”  
Echoed a name pronounced by single voice:  
“They honoured me and made me to rejoice.”  
I saw assemble thus the noble school  
Of him who lords it o’er the lofty song,  
Out-soars the others like an eagle strong;—

Discoursed they had to other for a while,  
Then turned to me with salutation sign.  
My master greeted it with such a smile,  
And greater honour upon me bestowed :  
They made me rank as one among their band,  
So that, amid such judgment, sixth I stand.  
So pass on conversing towards the light  
Of things that not to mention 's graceful here,  
Just as to speak them might be graceful there.  
We came to the foot of a noble castle,  
Seven times compassed with its lofty walls :  
Defending round a circling streamlet falls,  
O'er which we passed as if 'twere solid ground.  
Through seven gates entered I, the bards between,  
Came to a meadow of the freshest green.  
There were people there with slow and serious eyes,  
And great authority their countenance gave,  
Of clear speech, and voices gentler than the wave.  
Onward we drew, and from a corner bound  
Into a place open, luminous, and high,  
That all who were within I could espy :  
And there, directly o'er the enamelled green,  
Great spirits were displayed to me, who seem  
A sight to raise me in my own esteem.  
Electra I saw, and numerous company,  
Where Hector and Æneas I could spy—  
Cæsar in armour, with his eagle eye ;  
I saw Camilla, Penthesilea.  
On the other part I saw the Latin king,  
Who with his daughter Lavinia was sitting ;  
I saw that Brutus who chased Tarquinius,



Lucretia, Julia, Marcia, Cornelia,  
And alone, at one part, Saladino.  
Lifted a little more my eyebrow, saw  
Master of those who 've gained the right to sit  
In philosophic family of wit,  
Admired and honoured sage of every school.  
There saw I Socrates and Plato stand  
Before the others ; and more near at hand  
Democritus, who bade the world go by ;  
Diogenes, Anaxagoras, Thales,  
Empedocles, Heraclitus, Zeno,  
Of whom the good collector there I saw—  
Dioscorides I mean—and Orpheus ;  
Livy, moral Seneca, and Tullius ;  
Euclid, geometer, and Ptolemy ;  
Hippocrates, Galienus, Avicenna,  
Averroes of the great commentary.  
Every one fully I cannot portray :  
The lengthened theme would chase me from the tract—  
Oft what is said is lesser than the fact.  
The company of six divide in two ;  
The Sage conducts me by another way,  
Beyond that calm, to air the tempests shake,  
And to a place where light may never break.

## CANTO V.

So I descended from the first circle  
Now to second, of less ample round.  
Minos stood, grinding his teeth horribly ;  
Examines the ent'ring culprits by word ;  
Judges, commits, according to the gird—  
I mean, when ill-born souls before him come,  
When all's confessed, the examiner of sin  
Looks for infernal place to put it in :  
So many times his tail around him twines,  
As down beneath this culprit he consigns.  
Before him still the thronging numbers stand ;  
Each in vicissitude, his judgment own  
Speak out, and hear, and after are cast down.  
“ O thou that comest to hostelry of pain,”  
Said Minos when beholding me, and left  
Th' exceeding office of his care bereft,  
“ Mind how you enter here, in whom you trust ;  
Let not the spacious entrance thee deceive.”  
My leader to him, “ Wherefore do you grieve ?  
His fatal journey you cannot impede :  
It is the will of Him whose dwelling's where  
His will is law ; farther to ask, forbear.”  
Now the lamenting notes begin to rise,  
And pierce my heart with sorrow, make me faint,  
Struck with many an arrow of complaint.  
I came to place where light itself was mute,  
Rebellowing as tempests make the sea,

When striving winds are fighting vehemently,  
The infernal whirlwind, that never rests,  
Leads on the spirits at its rude behests,  
Rolling around, and striking them, molests.  
When we drew near to ruin's wild abode,  
Complaint and sorrow every air bestrode,  
Blaspheming there the goodness of their God.  
Of torment such as this, I understood,  
Were carnal sinners made to drink their fill,  
Their reason who subject unto their will.  
And as the starlings spread their wings aloft  
In the cold time, in long and crowded flock,  
Such are the evil spirits to the shock :  
From here to there, from low to high, it leads ;  
Nor hope nor comfort in their breast remain,  
Not of a pause, but even of lesser pain.  
And as the cranes go uttering their cry,  
In lengthened rank careering through the sky,  
So, uttering howls, I saw the shades pass by,  
Still carried onward by their destiny.  
Wherefore I said, " Master, whose are the cries—  
That race the blackening air doth so chastise ? "  
" The first of those you would hear tidings of,"  
Said he, " was empress of many a tongue ;  
In vice of luxury was wrecked so long,  
That pleasure she made lawful by her rule,  
Reproach to sever from habitual school.  
She is Semiramis, of whom you read,  
Who to her husband Ninus did succeed,  
And held that earth the Soldan hath bestrid.  
The other amorous, herself who slew,

Broke her faith to ashes of Sichæus.  
The next is Cleopatra luxurious."  
Helen I saw, for whom that wicked time  
Rolled on itself ; I saw great Achilles,  
Who loved, and raged, and battled to the lees.  
Paris and Tristan, and a thousand more,  
Shown were to me, whom, I by speech received,  
The passion love had of our life bereaved.  
Then after I had heard my teacher name  
Ancient ladies, cavaliers in long text,  
Compassion conquered me, as one perplexed :  
Then I said, " Poet, it's my wish to speak  
With these two souls that linger not behind,  
And seem to float so lightly to the wind."  
" You'll see," said he to me, " when they approach  
Nearer to us, and then you may beseech  
By that love leads them, and the spot they'll reach."  
The wind soon brought them to us, and I raised  
My voice, and said, " Afflicted souls, comply ;  
Come, speak to us, unless some else deny."  
As to their longing call, the wood-doves fly,  
Ope and shut their wings toward their sweet nest,  
Borne through the air by will within their breast,  
So these issued from the ranks of Dido,  
Advancing to us through malignant air,  
So strong affection's cry to lead them there.  
" O thou creature, so gracious and benign,  
Approaching through the thickened air, who would  
See those who tinged their country with their blood—  
Were the King of the universe our friend,  
Thy peace to him in prayer we 'd recommend,

To pity our perverseness who 'rt inclined,  
Of what it pleases thee to hear or speak,  
We'll hear these things, or speak of these to thee,  
While wind, as now, is lulling silently.  
The land is situate, where I was born,  
On the sea-shore, and where the Po descends  
In peace, to sink with 's tributary friends.  
Love, the lesson soon learned in gentle heart,  
Seized him for that fine person once possessed,  
Taken in manner still offends my breast.  
Love, to whose thrall there is no royal road,  
For this one, so passionately pleased me,  
That, as you see, not yet abandons me.  
Love conducted us to one common death.  
He who extinguished ours expects his own."  
These words were carried to me in their tone  
From when I understood the injured souls.  
I bent my visage down and held it low.  
Of what I thought, the poet wished to know—  
Asked, when I replied. I began, "Alas !  
What sweetest thoughts, and what desire,  
Have led these on to this regretful ire !"  
Again I turned myself to them and spoke,  
And began, "Francesca, thy sufferings sore  
Move me to tears, to sadness, and to more ;  
But tell me in the season of sweet sighs  
To whom was it, and how, you granted love—  
All its perplexing wishes came to prove."  
She said to me, "There is no greater grief  
Than to remember happiness in woe—  
That is a truth your teacher well may know.

If of our love to know the primal root  
Such great affection move thee, I will tell,  
And that like one who speaks and weeps as well.  
We were reading one day, for our delight,  
In Lancilotto, bound in love so strict.  
We were alone, and neither could suspect  
Suspended were our eyes, and more than once,  
In reading, and the visage colourless ;  
One point it was alone that conquered us.  
When we read first of that—the longed-for smile  
At being kissed by one who loved so well ;  
Then he that ne'er shall quit my side again,  
Began to kiss me on the mouth trembling.  
Galeotti was the book—he wrote it :  
That day we read not there any farther.”  
When the one spirit said this, the other  
Wept so, I was within an ace of death,  
And fell, as body falls, deprived of breath.

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## C A N T O VI.

WHEN as my mind again returned that closed  
To pity for the consanguineous pair,  
My sense confusing with engrossing care—  
New torments, new tormented, I beheld,  
Where'er I moved myself within the ward,  
And turned myself, and fixed mine eyes' regard.  
In the third circle am I, that of rain

Eternal, and accursed heavy cold ;  
No change of rule or quality unrolled :  
Big hailstones, water, ever tintured snow,  
The air of darkness turn by turn relieves,  
And stinks the earth which such a shower receives.  
Cerberus—wild beast, cruel, monstrous—  
While as three throats the dog of famine urge,  
To bark o'er those the waters thus submerge :  
His eyes vermilion, unctuous beard and black ;  
His belly large, and claws upon each hand—  
Cuts, flays, and quarters spirits at command ;  
Howling like dogs beneath incessant rain,  
Rolling on one side protect the other—  
Miserable profane, hither and thither.  
When the great worm Cerberus began to bite,  
His mouths extended, and the blood revealed ;  
No member had I that was not congealed.  
My leader then, extending both his hands,  
Took up the earth, and when the full fists close,  
Discharged them in the dog's insatiate jaws.  
And as the dogs, when yelling for their food,  
Are soon appeased, and when they touch 't give o'er,  
Intent and fighting only to devour,  
Thus of the demon Cerberus, the cheeks  
Collapsing fell, that barked without relief,  
That spirits would have wished that they were deaf.  
Then passed we through the shades, on whom comes down  
The heavy rain ; uttered complaints to see  
An empty shade where body seemed to be.  
Along the earth all who were there reclined,  
Save one alone we saw, who sat upright.

When first he saw us pass before his sight—  
“ O thou who comest by this infernal tract,  
Recognisest me—knowest me ?”—he said ;  
“ For thou existed ere I was unmade.”  
And I, “ The anguish that you suffer here,  
Form, it may be, forbids to recognise,  
So that you seem not to have met mine eyes.  
But tell me, thou, in such a doleful place,  
Who thou art who feel'st the dreadful season—  
Elsewhere pain, but none like this displeasing ? ”  
And he to me, “ 'Twas thy city held me,  
So full of envy, it o'erflows the brim ;  
In the unclouded days that careless swim.  
Ciaccio my name, among your citizens  
For gluttony and its condemned sin,  
As you now see, I perish in this rain.  
A soul in sadness I, but not alone ;  
Under like penalty all these remain  
For like transgression,” then spoke not again.  
“ Ciaccio,” I said, “ your weight of trouble 's such,  
Invites my spirit to lament it much :  
Say, if you know to what they will proceed,  
These members of the city they divide ?—  
If any there be just ; and tell whence  
Assailing discord, and its grave offence.”  
And he to me, “ From long debate they will  
Come to blood ; and these that from the forest throng  
Will chase the other with injurious wrong.  
And after needs must that party fall  
Within three solar years. Another soar  
With force of him whose dwelling 's by the shore :



For length of time 'twill lift its forehead high ;  
The other grievously oppress, as wont,  
With tributary tears, and each affront.  
The just are two ; they are not understood ;  
For envy, pride, and avarice conspire—  
Three sparks have kindled every breast with ire.”  
He put a stop to sound so lacrymose.  
And I, “ Wilt thou significantly teach,  
And grace my hearing farther with your speech ?  
The worthy Farinata, Tegghiaio,  
Jacopo, Rusticucci, and Mosca,  
Arrigo, and the others, understood  
To have had their genius bent on doing good—  
Tell me where they are, acquaint me with their fate,  
For much their circumstance I wish to know,—  
Taste they the sweets of heaven, or drugged below ?”  
And he, “ These are among the blacker souls ;  
A different fault already plunges them  
In lowest depths, that you can enter in  
When you shall be again in the sweet world.  
To the rest, I pray, my memory recall,—  
No more, I say to thee, reply at all.”  
His eyes, that were direct, he turned aside :  
I looked awhile—his head he then inclined,  
And fell with it among the other blind.  
The leader said, “ No more will he awake  
From hence, till the angelic trumpet break  
His sleep, when comes their inimical power.  
Each will revisit then his mournful tomb,  
Self reinvest, in form of flesh be found,  
Hear of eternity the thunder-sound.”

Through the debasing mixture thus we passed,  
Of shades, and of the hail, with footsteps slow,  
Touching on life to come, of bliss or woe.  
It was the reason why I said, "Master !  
When the grand sentence is past, is the pain  
Increased or lessened, or do these remain ?"  
And he to me, "What doth thy science teach ?  
Whatever thing is perfect's more endued  
To feel the evil, to perceive the good :  
To perfect misery will not they attain,  
The accursed race who suffer in this sphere,  
But nearer then than now they will appear."  
By a circuitous path, we journey'd on,  
Speaking of much that I do not relate,  
Came to the place, the steps descend below,  
And there we found Pluto, the mighty foe.

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## CANTO VII.

"PAPE Satan ! Pape Satan ! Aleppe !"  
Began then Pluto, with affrighted voice.  
Aware of all acquainted with the noise,  
The gentle sage comforted me. "Hurt not  
Thyself with fear ; no power has he to offend,  
Or stop by rock thy purpose to descend."  
Then to the inflated lip he turn'd, and said,  
"Silence ! accursed wolf ! Thy savage rage  
Consume within thyself, thy pangs t' assuage !

Not without reason he desires to go,  
Such is the will of Him, where Michael pour'd  
Vengeance on proud adultery from the Lord."  
As bending sails, when swelling with the wind,  
Sink down, enveloping the shiver'd mast,  
To earth the cruel savage, as we passed.  
To fourth ledge descended we by way  
Encroaching more on bank, where sadness reigns,  
Engulfing ill the universe contains.  
Ah ! justice of our God ! how heaps it up  
New troubles and new punishments I saw,  
And fault of ours such penalty to draw !  
As where Charybdis whirls, th' opposing wave  
Will rise to meet antagonistic shock,  
Such is the dance these wretches to bemock.  
Here saw I greater numbers than before.  
From one to other side, by force of chest,  
They roll the heavy weights that never rest,  
Which half way o'er, and in collision meet ;  
With shrieks roll backward, when they turn their feet.  
" Why do you hold it ? why do you mock ?"  
Make such recur across the circle dark,  
Hand opposite to hand, in toilsome bruit,  
Pursue again their ignominious route,  
Returning each to place from whence he crossed,  
Through his half circle for another joust :  
And I that was, as 'twere, pricked in my heart,  
Addressed him, and said, " Master, can you show  
What race this is, of hairy covering reft—  
Are these all churchmen who are on our left ?"  
And he, " Of mind oblique, in primal morn

Of life were they, as many as you view,  
Whose wild expenditure no measure knew,  
As their own voice will manifestly show,  
Of circling line two points when we have made,  
Where contrary transgression is displayed.  
Churchmen were these who have no cowl on head,  
Popes and Cardinals, the earthly crown  
And right supreme of avarice that own.”  
And I, “ Master, among these thickening ranks  
Some should I recognise, the sight would please,  
Who were untouched by vices such as these.”  
He—“ Vain imagination to conceive !  
Unknowing life, their mind so far abased,  
That knowledge now to darkness is debased.  
For they from out the sepulchre will rise,  
For ever fixed in two opposing schools,  
One with clenched fist, and one with shaven polls.  
Ill to give, and ill to keep, in noble world,  
Has snatched them thence, and smit them with rebuff :  
Such as it is, I have enlarged enough.  
Now see, my son, how frivolous and vain  
The goods committed unto Fortune’s hand,  
For which the race will so rebutting stand.  
Not all the gold that is beneath the moon,  
Nor all these toil-worn creatures have possessed,  
Could purchase for them but a moment’s rest.”  
“ Master,” said I to him, “ wilt thou impart  
What Fortune is you touch on, and the cause  
Why the world’s goods she clasps within her claws ? ”  
And he—“ Oh ! foolish creature ! to be blind  
What ignorance is that attacks your mind ?

Now see my words within your mouth enshrined.  
He, whose own wisdom everything transcends,  
When first He made the heavens, gave them a rule :  
Each shines itself, and yet reflects the whole ;  
The light distributes He alike to all.  
So to the worldly splendours He ordains  
A general minister to guide the reins ;  
In flight of time the goods so vain transfers  
To different nations and to different blood :  
Nor human judgments have His power withstood.  
One nation flourishes and languishes ;  
Another, as her judgment comes to pass,  
Like serpent, undistinguished in the grass—  
Your sense has no similitude to hers.  
She provides, judges, and pursues the cares  
Of kingdom, as the other gods do theirs.  
Her permutations are without a trace ;  
Necessity the spur that makes them speed,  
For often will vicissitudes succeed.  
This is that one so terribly maligned  
By those whose duty 'tis to give her praise.  
Reproach, and blame, and wrong, their voice conveys ;  
But, happy in herself, she hears not this :  
With primal creatures, where no care annoys,  
Rolls on her sphere, contented with her joys.  
Now to pity greater have we to descend.  
Each star's already setting that arose  
When first I moved : no farther stay allows.”  
We crossed the centre to th' opposing bank,  
Above a fountain that, o'erarching, wells  
Into a foss, which with its waters swells ;

Darker than water than dark blue or green.  
In company with these waves of purplish hue,  
Downward diverging path we entered through.  
A lake it forms, which has the Stygian name :  
Sad streamlet issuing, when it finds its way  
To the feet of dangerous cliffs of gray.  
Intent on looking where I stood, I saw  
A miry race naked within the pool,  
And of offence their countenances full.  
These struck each other, not with hand alone,  
But with the head, and with the chest, the feet,  
And cut themselves to pieces with their teeth.  
The good master said, "See, you now behold  
The souls of those by anger were o'ercome.  
And also take it for a certain sum,  
Beneath the water many a creature lies ;  
And see, the surface bubbles with their sighs :  
Where'er you turn your eyes you see them rise.  
Fixed in the mud, they say, ' We once were sad  
In the sweet air that's gladdened by the sun,  
Once carrying the lazy smoke within ;  
Now are we saddened in this black disguise.'  
This is the song they gurgle in their throats,  
For speak they cannot with articulate notes."  
Thus of that soiling pool our feet described,  
Grand arc between the dry bank and the mid,  
Still turned our eyes to those engulfed in mud.  
We came to the foot of a tower at last.

## CANTO VIII.

PURSUING theme, I say, as soon as we  
Had reached the bottom of the lofty tower,  
Our eyes went upward all the summit o'er.  
Betwixt two flaming lights presented there,  
Another at a distance signal made,  
So far, the distant light was scarce conveyed  
To th' ocean of all sense beside me turned.  
"What does this mean? and what replies now come  
Towerward from the other light? and placed by whom?"  
And he—"O'er surface of the soiling waves  
Now may'st discover who expects thee here,  
If marshy vapour let the bark appear."  
To run its pathway through the nimble air,  
Never sent string the arrow from the bow,  
As I beheld a little boat below  
Advancing towards us through the waves, wherein  
Sat one who steered alone that boat so fast,  
And cried, "Felon spirit, art come at last?"  
Flegias, Flegias, thou criest in vain :  
It can but end in nothing for this time,"  
He said, "You'll have us while we cross the slime."  
Like one unveiling when some grand deceit,  
Who broods on what has happened with regret,  
Thus in his ireful dudgeon Flegias sat.  
Into the boat descended then my guide ;  
When he was sitting, made me take seat toward :  
It seemed but then to have full freight on board.

Soon as my guide and I were in the bark,  
Cutting the waters went the antique prow,  
Faster for us than it is wont to go.  
Thus through the death-like channeled waves we ran,  
A miry figure came the boat before,  
With "Who art thou that comest before thine hour?"  
Said I—"If I come, I do not remain.  
But who art thou the loathsome waters steep?"  
Replied he—"I am one, you see, who weep."  
And I—"With weeping and with mud remain,  
Accursed spirit! there, and take your fill.  
Defaced as art by filth, I know thee still."  
Then to the bark outstretched he both his hands;  
My master saw at once, his purpose clogs,—  
"Away, and down there to the other dogs."  
Then with his arms he clasped me round the neck,  
Kissed my face with, "Disdainest, soul, my doom?  
Blessed was she that held thee in her womb."  
Haughty this person was in living world;  
There's naught of good his memory to adorn,  
And so his shade is furious and forlorn.  
How many mighty kings are now above,  
Shall one day stand like hogs within their sty,  
Disparaging their memory terribly.  
"Master," said I, "what pleasure shall I take,  
To see the filthy waters o'er him break,  
Before we come to issue from the lake!"  
And he to me—"Before you reach the bank,  
Your wish to see it will be satisfied—  
It is a wish that will not be denied."  
A little after this, the race of mud



Led on the assault in such outrageous ranks,  
For that I still to God give praise and thanks.  
All shouted—"To Filippo Argenti!"  
That spirit Florentine, without a wreath,  
Turned on himself, attacking with his teeth.  
Here left we him—no more of him I say.  
But now my ears assailed the sound of pain,  
Forward intent mine eye, nor swerved again.  
And the good master, saying—"Well, my son,  
The city now of Dis is close at hand,  
With its grave citizens with mighty band."  
And I—"Master, the minarets e'en now,  
Look there, within the valley, sure I see;  
Vermilion as it were issuing, fiery."  
And he to me—"It is the eternal fire,  
Kindling within, which makes the reddened glow  
Thou see'st in this infernal depth below."  
Now had we come within the deepened moat  
That ramparted that earth disconsolate:  
To me the walls appeared of iron weight.  
Not without circuit came we to the place;  
When as the pilot cried, as boat came near,  
"Go forth—this is the place—you enter here."  
More than a thousand saw I o'er the gate  
Of those who rained from heaven, who fiercely cried,  
"Who's he that treads this path who has not died,  
Advancing thus to kingdoms of the dead?"  
My master sage a signal 'gan to make,  
In secret with them that he wished to speak.  
Then for a while they closed their great disdain,  
And said, "Come thou, let him go back again,

Who with such ardour entered this domain.  
Let him retrace the foolish path he took,  
Prove that he knows it ; thou, his leader, bide,  
Through such dark country who have been his guide.”  
Think, reader, was I comforted at this,  
To hear of these accursed words the sound ;  
Return by me, I thought, would ne’er be found.  
“ Seven times by thy care, leader ! have I  
Been saved from danger, and the toils unbound  
Of peril deep that cinctured me around.  
Leave me not,” said I ; “ am not I undone ?  
Farther to go, if not for me decreed,  
Let us retrace the path again with speed.”  
And he, my signor and conductor said—  
“ Fear not that any can our passage bar,  
Or take away what’s given by such a power :  
But here expect me, and thy weary soul  
Comfort with food of heavenly hope, console ;  
In this low world desertion shalt not thole.”  
And so he went, and there abandoned me,  
The gentle father : I remained a prey  
To conflict in my head ’twixt yea and nay.  
What he proposed to them I could not hear ;  
But scarcely had he stood beside that crew,  
When each at once within, pell-mell, withdrew.  
And then our adversaries shut the gates  
In my lord’s bosom, who was left without,  
And turned to me with footsteps clogged with doubt.  
His eyes inclined to earth, from forehead now  
All boldness was erased ; he said with sighs,  
“ To doleful cases who my right denies ?”

And he to me—"Because I'm troubled, ne'er  
Astonished be ; I'll conquer in the proof,  
Strive how they may to keep my steps aloof.  
This utter negligence is nothing new ;  
Before they used it at the secret gate,  
Which still is found without the bolt of fate.  
Above it thou beheldst the deadly writ,  
And by its entrance one descends the pit,  
Without an escort through its circles lit,  
By whom alone this land shall opened be."

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## CANTO IX.

My colour, which betokened coward fear,  
Because I saw my master turn again,  
The sooner chased the fear he felt within.  
Attentive, firm, he listens like a man  
Whose eyes to lead no prospect is allowed,  
Through blackening air and through the gathering cloud.  
"Yet must we conquer in the contest near,"  
Began : "if not, there's offer of such aid,  
But, oh ! how long the other is delayed."  
I saw quite well my master had impaired  
The words first spoke with others in their train,  
Which differed from them in the main.  
But notwithstanding fear would not abate,  
Because I drew the mutilated speech  
To meaning worse, perhaps, than it could reach.  
"To depth of this profound and hollow shore

Has ever one descended can be named,  
Whose penalty is hope for ever lamed ?”  
This question asked I. “Rarely,” he replied,  
“It happens among us, the shades below,  
That any travel road through which I go.  
Once, it is true, down here I was before,  
Conjured by that Erictho’s deadly call,  
Who can the shadows in their flesh enthrall,  
From Judas’ circle spirit to recall.  
That is much lower place, much more obscure,  
And farther from the circling vault of heaven :  
I know the way, accept the surety given.  
This lake that such a noisome stench exhales,  
The doleful city compasseth around :  
Henceforth we enter but with angry sound.”  
Other thing he said, but ’tis not in my mind,  
For then my eye diverging was instead,  
To see at top the high tower glowing red ;  
When in one moment, forward and erect,  
The three infernal furies tinged with blood.  
Females they were in form and attitude,  
With hydras round them of the deepest green,  
Adders and scorpions twist, instead of hair :  
Such the fierce temples of the furies wear.  
Acquainted with the wretched servants, he,  
Of the dire queen of never-ending cries.  
“Behold there,” he said, “the fierce Erinnyes ;  
This is Megæra, as you look to left ;  
This lamenting on the left’s Alectro ;  
Tisiphone between,” and said no more.  
Each with her nails was tearing at her breast,

Beating themselves with palms, and shrieked so loud,  
I to the poet clung, myself to shroud.  
“Medusa come! of him enamel make.  
For we,” they all exclaimed, with downward look,  
“No trifling vengeance upon Theseus took.”  
“Turn thee around, and keep thine eyelids shut;  
For if the Gorgon once shall meet thine eye,  
There will be no return to upper sky.”  
So said my master, and himself me turned,  
Nor trusted to my hands the task alone,  
That then he should not close them with his own.  
Oh ye who have the understanding sane!  
Regard the doctrine that is hid in this,  
Nor under veil of verse the meaning miss.  
And now there came, across the turbid wave,  
Sound of alarm of tumultuous roar:  
The echoing shudder ran along each shore,  
Not otherwise than when a rising wind,  
Impetuous borne from adversary heats,  
Strikes on the forest it o’erwhelming meets—  
Rends down the branches, carries them afar;  
In front the dusty whirlwind proudly goes,  
And beasts and shepherds flee the fatal blows.  
My eyes he loosed, and said, “The nerve of light  
Direct now o’er that froth that foamed of old,  
Beyond that smoke, more bitter to behold.”  
As frogs, before the serpent enemy,  
Make through the waters in retiring band,  
Until each one is lodged within the land,  
Thousand and more of ruined souls I saw  
Fly thus before the face of one whose sole

The waters wet not of the Stygian pool.  
From countenance removed th' unwholesome air  
His left hand moved like one engaged to swim :  
'Twas that air that seemed alone t' annoy him.  
Well could I perceive a messenger from heaven,  
And, turned to me, my master signal made  
Quiet to stand, to him incline my head.  
And ah ! how full appeared he of disdain !—  
Came to the gate, and touched it with a wand—  
It opened as entirely at command.  
“ Oh ! chased from heaven, ye contemned race,”  
Commenced he, while he stood o'er threshold dire,  
“ Whence this excess of insolence and ire ?  
Why will you kick against the Sovereign will ?  
You cannot stop, retard, nor pain abate :  
Remember He has oft increased its weight.  
What boots it thus to butt against the fates ?  
Your Cerberus, you recollect, you know,  
Bears marks of this upon his throat and jaw.”  
Returned to go across the filthy way,  
To us he motioned not, who saw the trace  
Of man, whom other thoughts and cares embrace  
Than that of him who is before his face ;  
And we advanced our footsteps to the land,  
Secure in sacred accents of command,  
Within we entered without any war,  
And I, who had the wish to see, observed  
The fortress, and condition it preserved.  
Entering, mine eye I turned beyond the way,  
And viewed on every hand a wide champaign,  
Replete with sorrow and with wicked pain.

As when at Arles the rapid Rhone stands still,  
Or as at Pola, by Quarnaro's round,  
That closes Italy, and laves its bound,  
The sepulchres make all the place a mound—  
So did they there, in each divisioned heap,  
Save that more bitter things disturb their sleep ;  
For 'midst the sepulchres were frequent flames,  
By which throughout they were inflamed with fire—  
Nor e'en could iron better forge desire.  
Suspended there was every lid of death :  
From out were ushered such lamenting howls  
As come from miserable and injured souls.  
And I—" Master, who are the nation there ?  
Who are interred within the frequent vaults,  
That make us feel their plaintive, sad assaults ?"  
And he to me—" The heretics are there,  
With those that followed them, of every sect ;  
And more are in the tombs than you'd expect—  
Like with his like is buried in this place.  
The monuments have more and less of heat ;"  
And to the right hand then inclined his feet,  
Between the ramparts and the martyrs' seat.

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## CANTO X.

THROUGH a strait alley now we go, that ran  
Between the wall and where the torment smoulders,  
My master, myself behind his shoulders.

“Oh highest worth, who by the impious gyres  
Conductest me ! satisfy, if you please,  
My wish to hear thee—give my spirit ease.  
The nation that reclines amid the tombs—  
May they be seen ? each coffin-lid they raise,  
And guard—there’s none to interrupt the gaze.”  
And he to me—“ Again will all be shut,  
When from Jehosaphat the soul returns,  
And brings that form which now the earth inurns.  
Their cemetery in this direction lies,  
With all the followers Epicurus claims,  
Who make the souls to perish with their frames.  
But to the question which you made me late—  
Here will they satisfy, and here reveal  
The secret of the wish you now conceal.”  
“ To thee, my guide, my heart is never shut ;  
From thee, my leader good, I have but hid  
My too much speech, erewhile you lightly chid.”  
“ O, Tuscan traveller ! through the peopled fire  
Alone who goest, and so discreet in speech,  
This place to rest in, let me thee beseech.  
Thy language this proclaims thy birth to be  
Of noble native country, so expressed ;  
That land perhaps too much I did molest.”  
From out an archèd vault the sudden sound  
Arose, which made my steps somewhat incline,  
In fear, to reach the noble master mine.  
And he to me—“ Why turn ?—what is the cause ?  
See, Farinata ’s raised himself upright  
Up from the girdle. You will see him quite.”  
I had my face already fixed on his,



Erect with brow and chest, to bear the brunt,  
As if he would e'en hell itself affront.  
My leader, with courageous hand, was prompt  
To push me through the sepulchres to him.  
He said—"Now let your words distinctness seem."  
At the foot of his tomb as soon as I,  
Me for a space he eyed disdainfully,  
Then asked me—"Your ancestors, who were they?"  
And I, to whom obedience was desire,  
Concealed not aught, but everything revealed;  
At which his eyebrow for a while upheld,  
And then, "The fiercest adversaries were they  
Of me, my party, and the race that nursed—  
Their musters, therefore, have I twice dispersed."  
"Though chased, they came again from every side.  
Both one and the other time," I replied:  
"To learn that lesson yours have never tried."  
And then arose, uncovering from the sight,  
A shade that came exactly to the chin,  
Which seemed to me its knees uprising on.  
Round me it looked, as if it were desire  
Another form to see within its scope;  
But after quite extinguished was that hope,  
Through this dark prison, he weeping said—"If you  
Advance, by loftiness of genius led,  
My son, why has not he accompanied?"  
And I to him—"I come not of myself;  
There's one expecting me will there remain,  
Haply your Guido has had in disdain."  
The words he spoke, the measure of his pain,  
The lesson taught me how to read his name—

That was the cause reply so fully came.  
On a sudden he raised himself upright :  
“How has had, saidst thou—is he not alive ?  
In daylight sweet does he no longer thrive ?”  
Perceiving then that some delay I made,  
Before to question I the answer gave,  
He fell supine again within the grave.  
But the other, that soul magnanimous  
Whose post I watched, ne’er altered his aspect,  
Nor bowed his side, nor seemed to move his neck.  
“And if,” continuing what at first he said,  
“These arts, you say, they have but lamely learned—  
’Tis torment more than bed wherein I’m burned.  
Not fifty times shall be returned that light  
Of lady’s face who reigns in dark twilight,  
Of arts like these when thou shalt find the weight.  
Now, as thou wouldst to pleasant world return,  
Tell me the cause that people are so fierce,  
My kindred in each law of theirs to pierce.”  
“The ravage,” I replied, “the great outrage,  
Which made the Arbia’s waters died in red,  
Have made such prayers within our temple said.”  
’Twas after that he sighing shook his head.  
“In that,” said he, “I was not single, nor  
Was without cause with others heretofore.  
But then, when not a finger would have stirred  
Florence to save, my voice alone was heard—  
Its ruin to resist with open word.”  
“Thy seed, oh may they find at last repose !”  
Besought I him : “unloose this knot entwined,  
Which here entangled has my anxious mind.

It would appear you saw, if I am right,  
Before, what time as yet has not unrolled,  
But yet the present you do not behold.”  
“We can behold, like one whose sight is bad,  
The things,” said he, “more distant and remote :  
A ray of splendour from the Highest shot,  
When they approach our intellect, is vain,  
Unless from others we some insight gain.  
Of human race no knowledge we attain,  
But understand that all is dark beside,  
Beyond the point ordained by fate,  
Where of the future he has shut the gate.”  
And then, as one who felt compunction strong,  
Said I—“Now tell that falling shade, reclined,  
That to the living still his son is joined.  
If this reply of mine before was mute,  
Make him to know that I was then involved  
In error, which your speech has now dissolved.”  
And already my master me recalled :  
I prayed the spirit, with entreating speech,  
His sad companions and their names to teach.  
“More than a thousand are there where I lie :  
Within here is Frederick the Second,  
And the Cardinal.” Of others not a sound,  
After that was hid ; and towards the antique  
Poet I turned my steps, revolving then  
That speech which seemed to me of hostile men.  
Himself he moved, and, as we went along,  
He said—“Why are you anxious and distressed ?”  
And then I spoke and satisfied request.  
“What thou hast heard against thee, let thy mind

Preserve," the sage commanded as I gazed.  
"Now mark me here," and then his finger raised ;  
"When thou shalt be before the dazzling ray  
Of her whose eye sees all things like the day,  
From her thou'lt learn of life thy future way."  
Nearer to the left hand then he turned his feet ;  
We left the wall, went to the midst by path,  
Which strikes into a neighbouring valley,  
Whose steeps above th' exhalations rally.

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## CANTO XI.

At the extremity of a lofty ridge,  
Which broken rocks into a circle formed,  
Our forward steps more cruel brambles harmed.  
And here, from horrible effluvia  
In excess the abyss profound cast up,  
We hied behind a monumental cope,  
A writing on the which I saw, which said,  
"The Pope Anastasius I protect ;  
Photinus him withdrew from life direct."  
"Descending here, our steps must needs be slow ;  
The sense to reconcile, the steps retards,  
To the sad time it soon no more regards."  
My master so : and I—"Some recompense,"  
Said I, "that passing time may not be lost."  
And he, "'Tis this with which my mind's engrossed.  
My son, within these circling rocks you see,"  
He then commenced to say, "are circles three,

From step to step like those you leave with me—  
Sufficient afterwards for us the sight :  
Now mark the how and why they're in this plight.  
Of evil deed, that 's stamped with hate in heaven,  
Is injury the end. Each end 's attained  
With force or fraud, by which another's pained.  
Since fraud is then the native ill of man,  
It more displeases God ; beneath the vault,  
The fraudulent the deeper pains assault—  
Of sons of violence, the first circle 's full.  
Since to three persons violence is done,  
In three distinct constructed gyres they groan :  
To God, to self, and to neighbour, can one  
Do force. Of these I'll speak, of their affairs,  
As you shall hear when farther speech declares.  
There's death by force, by wounds of bitter pain  
To neighbour given, and to the estate they hold ;  
Ruins, and fires, and depredations bold,  
Whence homicides, and every violent hand,  
Robbers and thieves, where each tormented sinks  
In the first circle, but in different ranks.  
Upon himself, and upon his own goods,  
May man lay violent hand ; and thus is pent  
In second circle proper punishment.  
Whoe'er deprives himself of living world,  
His talent swallows up or wastes away,  
And weeps, where cheerfulness should hold the sway.  
Force may be done to the Deity, when  
Pronounce denying or blaspheming men,  
Despising Nature, good within their ken :  
And hence the lesser gyre, that, circling, seals

Sodom and Cahors with their bitter signs,  
Contemptuous heart-speech against God confines.  
And fraud, that every conscience can corrode—  
Fraud may be practised against them who trust,  
And those who put no confidence in dust.  
This seems to come behind, it only slays  
The kindly chains of love that nature binds.  
Hence, in the lesser circle, station finds  
Hypocrisy, flattery, and sorcery ;  
Falsification, robbery, simony,  
Seduction, quarrels, and brutality.  
In the other mode, that love is forgot  
Which Nature makes, and that to it adjoined  
By special faith, created in the mind.  
Hence, in low centre-point of universe,  
Where Dites has his ruling seat assumed,  
Whoe'er betrays eternally 's consumed.”  
And I—“ Master, your reasoning clear, as it proceeds,  
Distinguishes this dungeon of distress,  
As well as all the people who possess.  
But tell me why those of the dull stagnant lake,  
Whom the wind carries, and the rain assails,  
Whose bitter tongue the inward strife unveils—  
Why are they not within that reddening fire,  
Whose city walls reflect th' avenging ire  
Of God ?—if not, why does such fashion tire ?”  
And he to me—“ Why do you dream so far ?”  
Said he, “ Your genius wanders from its wont,  
Or else your mind on other thoughts is bent.  
Rememberest not the words with which the page  
Of ethics, thy philosophy, is full ?

Three dispositions, contrary to will  
Of God,—incontinence, malice, and mad  
Brutishness. Incontinence least offends,  
And less of punishment the vice attends.  
If, then, that judgment you regard aright,  
And think on whom the bounds without contain,  
Who seem repentance fruitless to sustain,  
Well may you see why from these spirits fell  
They're parted ; why heaven for less torment calls,  
Less strong the hammer of its justice falls.”  
“Thou sun, that clearest every clouded sight,  
You so content me to dissolve the knot,  
To know is scarce so pleasing as to doubt.”  
“Philosophy,” he said, “to him who marks  
Its progress down, not in one part alone,  
Like Nature's self, its parent course will own  
From the divine intellect, work of God.  
And if the science physical you mind,  
Not many pages will you scan to find  
Your art unswerving follow, if it could,  
As master makes the scholar learn, who would,  
So that your art's the child of child of God.  
For these two, if right considered in the mind,  
From first of Genesis the truth receive,  
Life and advancement to the nations gave.  
But usury has ta'en another way,  
Despising Nature and her handmaid Art,  
Far other hopes his light of life impart.  
But follow me, for I would fain advance,  
For, see, the Pisces on the horizon swim ;



Inclining now, the Wain is o'er north-west,  
Our way is down yon precipice's breast."

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## CANTO XII.

THE place we came to, to descend the steep,  
Was Alpine, and the passage headlong down,  
That to behold it every eye would shun.  
Such is that ruin on the mountain's flank,  
On this side Trento, where the Adige cuts short,  
Through earthquake's force, or want of more support ;  
Where, from the mountain top, that once has moved,  
Down to the plain, dissevered is the rock,  
Scarce entrance gives through elemental shock :  
Such was the precipice, the way to lock.  
And on that very point of ruined strength,  
The infamy of Crete was stretched at length,  
Conceived within the feigned heifer's womb ;  
Who, when he saw, began himself to bite,  
Like one whose inward rage comes out to sight.  
Turned towards him my sage, and cried—"Perchance  
You think the Duke of Athens now has come,  
In world above who sealed your earthly doom ?  
Depart, thou monster ! him advancing here  
Thy sister leads not who the clue retains,  
For here he comes but to behold thy pains !"  
Such is the bull who bounds beneath the blow,  
Even as the death-blow strikes the victim's hide,



Advances not, but plunges to the side,  
Such was the Minotaur before my sight.  
He cried,—“ His fury but a moment lends ;  
The steep descending, safety now attends.”  
Descending now the cleft and channeled rock,  
Oft as the lengthened way new load would meet,  
Those crags would totter underneath my feet.  
Reflecting in my mind. “ You think,” he said,  
“ Why of this ruin to defend the bound,  
That bestial rage, which late I came to wound ?  
Now, I would have you know, the time before  
That I came down to this infernal hole,  
This rifted rock had not begun to fall ;  
But certain 'tis, if I can well discern,  
He came, who bore the mighty spoil away,  
From upper circle, under Dites' sway.  
On every side the lofty valley shook  
And trembled so, I thought the universe  
That love perceived, which, on recurring years,  
Can turn the world to chaos with its tears.  
That moment severed was the hoary rock,  
Rolled and swerved o'erturning from the shock ;  
But, on the valley look, approaches now  
The ensanguined river, in the boiling blood  
The violent who hurt another's good.  
O blind cupidity ! O foolish wrath !  
Through this short life, that spurs them to the sleep,  
Eternally in tide like this to steep.”  
An ample fosse I saw, in shape a bow,  
Like that which all the level ground embraced,  
My guide had first within the prospect placed.

The arrowed Centaurs ran along the space,  
As in the world they're wont to join the chase.  
When our descent they saw, each checked his course,  
Three from the Centaur troop were seen to burst,  
With arrows and with lances chosen first ;  
And one cried—" From far to trouble come ye,  
The precipice who are descending now,—  
Answer from thence, or else I draw the bow ?"  
My master said—" The answer we will make  
To Chiron, when beside him we stand still :  
Evil and hasty ever was thy will."  
He touched me then, and said—" This is Nessus,  
Who for the love of Deianira died,  
And at the last revenged himself beside.  
And this in the midst, upward from the breast,  
Is great Chiron, who nursed Achilles' path ;  
And Pholo that, who was so full of wrath."  
Around the fosse thousand to thousand ran,  
Shot at each soul, above the sanguine flood  
Emerging farther than his fault allowed.  
To wild and nimble race we nearer came :  
Chiron an arrow took, the notch upreared,  
With that on cheek-bones he repressed his beard ;  
And when he had disclosed his mighty mouth,  
To his companions said,—“ His nature's such  
That one behind will move what he can touch :  
Not so the feet of Death are wont to do.”  
And now my master, who had reached the chest  
Where the two natures into one compressed,  
Replied—" Alive he is, and is alone :  
Mine the deep valley to display to sight—

Necessity the cause, and not delight ;  
Such was the errand from the heavenly choir—  
The task commissioned unto me to give.  
No thief is he, nor I soul fugitive.  
But by that virtue by the which I move  
Along these savage crags—this rocky verge—  
One escort give to take us under charge,  
To show the way by which we have to pass,  
Who may place him aloft upon the croupe :  
He's not a spirit, with the air to cope.”  
Chiron turned himself to the right breast—said  
To Nessus—“ Turn thyself and be his guide ;  
Encountering others, keep them from his side.”  
Under true escort we went on our way,  
By banks of that vermillion boiling flood,  
Where the boiled people seemed to shriek aloud.  
A nation there I saw to eyebrow plunged ;  
“ Tyrants are they,” the mighty Centaur said ;  
“ In what they loved to shed they're overhead :  
Here, at length, lament their merciless deeds.  
Alexander 's here ; Dionysius fierce,  
Tyrant who saddened Sicily for years ;  
And that dark-brow complexion, almost black,  
Is Azzoline ; him fair you now survey,  
Obizzo of Este : the truth to say,  
His step-son robbed him of the living day.”  
Turned to the poet's voice to catch the sound :  
“ He'll be now your first, and I your second.”  
A little farther, where the Centaur fixed  
Above a race emerging from the throat—  
Thus far above the boiling flood we note—

He showed me then a solitary shade—  
He to the bosom of his God who sent  
That heart above the Thames they still lament.  
Nations I saw beyond the river mark,  
Who held their head and even their neck above ;  
Of several could I recognition prove.  
Lower and lower now that blood became,  
And now it only came above the feet ;  
And here the passage of the fosse we meet :  
“ In like manner as on this side you see  
The ebullition ever shallower,”  
The Centaur said, “ believe what I aver,  
That on the other, downward more and more,  
The bottom presses, till at last it join  
The bounds which groaning tyranny confine.  
The justice, here, of heaven inflicts the pang  
On Attila, who was its scourge on earth—  
Pyrrhus and Sextus—and, like milk, draws forth  
The tears which in a boiling current flow  
From Rinier Corneto—Rinier Pazzo—  
Who filled the ways of peace with war and sword.”  
He turned himself, and so repassed the ford.

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## C A N T O   X I I I .

From that point Nessus was not yet returned,  
When we began to enter through a wood,  
Marked by no path we found to be pursued.

No fresh green leaves, but of a dusky hue ;  
Nor smooth boughs, but knotted twisted kind ;  
Nor apples were, but thorns with poison rind :  
Not half so rough the thick and gnarled trunks  
Within that savage wild so hateful found,  
Between Cecina's and Corneto's ground.  
The brutal harpies there their nests prepare,  
Whom from the Strophades the Trojans chased,  
With sad announcement of their future waste.  
Broad wings they have, and necks, and human face,  
Articulated feet, and belly wings,  
O'er the strange trees their lamentation rings.  
The good master—" Before we enter far,  
These, you must know, are in the second gyre,"  
Began to tell me ; " and in that they 'll tire,  
Until you see them in the horrid sand.  
But now regard them well, and soon you'll see  
How certain things with my discourse agree."  
On every side arose the frequent cries,  
But person saw I none from whom they came.  
I stopped—perplexity possessed my frame.  
I believe that he thought that I believed  
From thickets, or men concealed within the same,  
That all the voices in the branches came :  
" For strike," said he, " a young shoot from a bough—  
From one of these that in the thicket grow—  
Your present thoughts will vanish with the blow."  
Forward a little then I stretched my hand,  
And tender shoot took from a thorny tree.  
The trunk exclaimed, " Why do you shiver me ?"  
Soon as the deed was done, 'twas brown with blood,—

Began to cry, " Me wherefore do you tear ?—  
Your spirit, then, does no compassion share ?  
We once were men, but now are trunks of trees.  
Your hand more pity might have shown to wood,  
Had we been even of the serpent's brood."  
Like a green faggot that begins to burn  
At one of its heads, while the other sighs  
And crackles as the breezes through it rise,  
So from the riven branch there came both words  
And blood ; made me the tapering top let fall—  
Affrighted stand, like one whom fears appal.  
" Could he have thought," the master said, " before,  
Offended soul ! that such as this would chance,  
That he should witness what my rhymes advance,  
He had not stretched his hand against thy weal."  
The thing was so incredible, it made  
Me doubt—intending to persuade.  
" But tell him who thou wert, for then, perchance,  
When he returns, if world retain thy fame,—  
'Twere some amendment to refresh thy name."  
" Inveiglest me with thy sweet speech," it said ;  
" I'll not be silent, and you will not grieve  
From me some little reasoning to receive.  
'Twas I two keys who held of Frederick's heart—  
Now closed and now unclosed them at my will,  
Howe'er he turned, for such was once my skill ;  
From every man his secret thought would draw.  
Such duty to my glorious office brought,  
For it my veins and pulses went for naught.  
The harlot who from the Cæsar's palace ne'er  
Withdraws the baseness of her eyelet's stare ;

The vice of courts, like pestilence in air,  
Inflamed against me every neighbour's heart—  
Inflaming all—Augustus last took fire,  
And all my blooming honours turned to ire.  
My spirit, then, disdainful with disgust,  
Thought with my death to shun dishonoured dust.  
Unjust the deed, for I myself was just.  
By the fresh tendrils of the rooted wood,  
I swear that I have never broken word  
Against myself, against my honoured lord.  
If either to the world return again,  
Comfort my memory, lying in the grave,  
Beneath the wound which bitter envy gave.”  
I paused ; and then, when he beheld me still,  
He said—“ The present moment do not lose,  
But ask him other questions if you choose.”  
Then I—“ Will you request his answer still,  
Whate'er you think may satisfaction give—  
My drooping spirit I must first revive.  
But yet,” I recommenced, “ if man perchance  
May freely ask you what your speech implies,  
Impart, imprisoned spirit ! if you please ;  
And tell me how the soul itself arrives  
Within these woody huts, and if you can  
Outspread from these the limb of living man.”  
Deeper the breeze sighed through the trunk, and then  
The wind was altered to a human cry—  
“ Briefly to you,” it said, “ shall I reply.  
When from the frame ferocious spirit flies,  
Minos consigns the soul itself could wound  
To low depth, to seventh avenging bound.



Falls in the wood, and not in chosen place,  
A bolt from fortune's crossbow, spot to meet,  
And there to germinate like grain of wheat,  
Rises to sapling or to woody plant,  
The harpies pasture on, our leaves devour,  
Occasion pain, and ope the gate to more.  
Like others we shall come to seek our spoils,  
But ne'er again the body to invest ;  
For robber to receive would not be just.  
Our train be here, and through the wood of sighs,  
Suspended here the bodies of the dead,  
Each at the thorn which holds his troubled shade."  
Listening to the trunk intent we stand ;  
We thought 'twould speak again, and we should hear,  
When murmured sudden what surprised our ear.  
'Twas like to that which heard is to approach  
The wild boar's den in chase—the sudden dash,  
The noise of wild beasts and the branches' crash.  
Lo ! two from left, outbounding in their flight,  
Naked and torn, the piercing bramble's wrath.  
The one in front—"Oh, gallop, gallop, Death !"  
The one behind, to whom his steps were slow—  
"Not so your sinews stretched on Toppo's list,  
Lano, nor such a feeble power dismiss."  
Then the forespent and failing breath, was seen to hush ;  
Himself he gathered up into a bush.  
Behind their track was all the woodland full  
Of black she-mastiffs, ireful, eager, rash,  
Who ran like greyhounds issuing from the leash.  
On the poor wretch they fastened with their teeth,  
And, lacerating, tore him limb from limb,



And grieving members bore away with them.  
At that time the leader pressed me by the hand,  
Led me to bush, lamenting, like the rain,  
Its bleeding wounds—bleeding, alas ! in vain.  
“ O Jacopo ! ” he said, “ St Andrea !  
What good from shelter thou hast made of me !—  
Let thine own wicked life recoil on thee.”  
Above the branches, when the sage stood still,  
He said, “ Who wert thou ?—tell me, I beseech,  
Who bleedest thus, and pourest thy doleful speech.”  
And he to us—“ Oh, ye united souls !  
Are ye come here to see dishonoured elf,  
Whose leaves are all disjointed, from himself  
Lay them by stem where rooted sorrow grows ?  
I was of city of the Baptist’s shrine,  
Which former patron changed, fame to resign,  
And feel his anger in her arts’ decline.  
Without thy waters, Arno, to delight,  
The city’s self would scarce remain in sight.  
Those citizens who raised her form anew  
Above the ashes Attila had left,  
Would they have laboured, of their gains bereft ?  
From my own roof I hung the deadly weft.”

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## C A N T O   X I V .

Moved by the charity of native place,  
The scattered leaves collected I restored

To him, with voice already hoarse and lowered.  
We came then to the boundary which divides  
The second circle from the first, and where  
The arts of Justice horrible appear.  
New things to manifest aright to view,  
I say that we arrived upon a land  
Upon whose bed no plant's allowed to stand :  
The wood of sorrow is its garland round,  
And the sad fosse its corresponding bound.  
Our steps we closed upon the edge of ground—  
Not in another guise from what is dressed  
The land which Cato's footsteps once impressed.  
Avenging power of God ! how should each fear,  
Who reads of this, arresting with surprise,  
The sight which manifestly met mine eyes !  
I saw of naked souls the numerous herds,  
Lamenting all, and miserably enough,  
In diverse parties, from the rest aloof.  
One nation lay supinely on the ground,  
And one was gathered all into a seat,  
And other went continually on feet ;  
The one advancing round by far the most,  
And those which lay in torment were the less,  
But tongue more loosed, their anguish to express.  
Above the expanse of sand, with lingering fall,  
Dilated flakes of fire to earth inclined,  
As in the Alps the snows, without the wind.  
As Alexander, in the hotter parts  
Of India, found descending on his ranks,  
To earth the flames its thirsty bosom drinks ;  
He charged his ranks to trample on the soil,

Of single fire the onward progress tames,  
Denying thus the fuel to the flames :  
So downward fell the everlasting heat ;  
Inflamed the sand, as under stove fire, so !  
And thus redoubled unimagined woe.  
Without repose, as if they trifled, flung  
From side to side their miserable hands,  
As the fresh flame a movement fresh demands.  
“ Master,” I said, “ who hast all things o’ercome,  
Except the encounter of the demons dire,  
Who issued from the gate they closed in ire,  
Who is that great one ? It would seem he cares  
Not for the flames, wrapt in disdainful pride,  
As if the shower could not invade his side.”  
And this same one, aware that I had asked  
My leader who he was, himself then cried,  
“ Such was I when I lived, and such I died.  
If Jupiter his workman wearied out,  
Struck with sharp thunderbolt before he fell,  
(By which percussion, too, I came to hell,)  
And if he still fatigue the rest in turn,  
In Mongibello, at the blackened forge,  
And cry, ‘ Good Vulcan, help and onward urge ! ’  
And if again, as in Phlegrea’s field,  
With arrow shoot at me with all his might,  
No vengeance shall he have that can delight.”  
My leader spoke then with redoubled force,  
Such as I had not heard, “ O Capaneus !  
Unquenched thy pride ; of punishment less use—  
No torment could surpass thy raging pride,  
Or equal, thorn-like, that within thy side.”

Turned afterwards to me with milder lip—  
“Of the seven kings was this who Thebes besieged,  
And much the Deity by him outraged—  
Little he prizes, treats him with disdain.  
But, as I told him, his despites within  
Must wound him with retributory pain.  
Now come behind me—see you do not place  
Your onward feet upon the burning sand :  
To keep by wood your footsteps close command.”  
Was silent ;—then we reached a place from whence  
Came rivulet gushing from the wood to bend,  
So red, it makes my hair still stand on end.  
Such Bullicame’s streamlet issuing hot,  
Apportioned there beside the evil door ;  
So glides it downward by the sandy shore.  
Its bottom there, and both its banks, are made  
Of rocks whose margins are dilated wide :  
Liberty to pass, methought, was not denied.  
“Of all besides I have displayed to thee,  
Since through the frowning portal first we hied,  
To pass whose threshold is to none denied ;  
Naught have you met so worthy of regard,  
Or aught like this the stream to which you came,  
Above it quenching every fiery flame.”  
These words my leader had pronounced to me,  
My curiosity I wished appeased,  
Begged him to feed the hunger he had raised.  
“In middle of the sea a land there is,  
Called Crete, once rich, but now consigned to waste,  
Under whose king the world erewhile was chaste.  
A mountain in it lies which used to smile

With water and with leaves, Ida," he said,  
"But now deserted like a thing forbid.  
Rhea selected cradle for her son ;  
When the child wept, would still, t' avoid surprise,  
Conceal his weeping with another's cries.  
Within the mountain stands a mighty form,  
Its shoulders to Damiaata nearer,  
Unto Rome it looks as to its mirror.  
Its head is formed of noble metal, gold ;  
Of arms and breast in silver pure the work,  
And then is brazen downward to the fork :  
Beneath from thence is made of iron tempered,  
Save the right foot, which is of potter's clay,  
On that erecter than the left will stay.  
Except where it is gold, each part is broke  
With fissure, dropping tears at every spot,  
Whose stream united hollowed out that grot ;  
To valley then in crumbling course descends,  
And forms Acheron, Styx, and Phlegeton.  
Advancing after through this channel on  
At last to place from whence there's no descent,  
Cocytus makes : but of this lake the state  
You'll see yourself, and I need not relate."  
And I to him—"If present rivulet  
In such a manner from our world's derived,  
At edge why have we only now arrived ?"  
And he—"You know the situation's round.  
Far as you've come at each descending turn,  
From left, to reach at last the lowest bourne,  
You have not compassed yet its utmost bound.  
Within it, then, should aught appear per chance,

Why marvels more at that your countenance ?”  
And I still—“ Master, where is Lethe found,  
And Phlegeton ?—the one your speech restrains,  
You say of other that from this it rains ?”  
“ With all your questions surely I am pleased :  
To red and boiling stream I leave the task  
To solve the mystery of the one you ask.  
Lethe you ’ll see, but ’tis beyond this fosse,  
Where spirits come to wash within its wave—  
Repented and removed th’ offence they gave.”  
Then said, “ But now ’tis time to quit the wood :  
Observe that you exactly follow me.  
Margined ways escape from burning anguish,  
O’er them every ardent cloud extinguish.”

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## CANTO XV.

ONE of the rocky margins bears us where  
Ascending vapour o’er the stream appears,  
To keep from fire the water and the piers.  
As between Ghent and Bruges the Flemings stop  
The swelling flood from darting on their lands,  
And shelter make from which the sea rebounds.  
Along the Brenta thus the Paduans,  
To defend their cities and their castles,  
Until the Chiarentina summer feels.  
In form like such were these embankments made,  
Lofty and large, the channel to protect,

Raised by whatever master architect.  
And now we wandered, parted from the wood,  
That its direction e'en escaped my ken,  
Although I turned to view it once again :  
When we encountered band of gathered souls  
Who came along the pier, and every one  
Regarded us, as when the evening's down,  
Each marks the other in the bright new moon ;  
With sharpened eyebrow their inspection try,  
As an old tailor at his needle's eye.  
By such a family eyed as this, at last  
One recognised me, and began to seize  
Me by the skirt, and cried, " What marvel 's this ?"  
And when he stretched his hand to me, I looked,  
And fixed my eyes upon his shrivelled face ;  
That scorched, stained visage could not, for a space,  
Conceal his countenance from my spirit's gaze.  
Towards his face my hand I then inclined,  
Replied—" Is't you, Brunetto, here I find ?"  
And he—" My son, let it not displease thee,  
If Brunetto Latini turn backward  
With thee to speak : let the rest go forward."  
I said—" I pray thee, as much as I can :  
If you would I should sit with thee, I will,  
If it should please him with whom I travel."  
" My son," said he, " whoe'er of all this herd  
Stops for a moment, lies a hundred years,  
Nor fans the form the burning fire-flake sears.  
Then onward, and beside thy garments, I  
Within the ranks of company close  
Who go lamenting their eternal woes."

I had not courage to descend from path  
To walk beside him, but inclined my head,  
Like one whom reverence and submission swayed.  
And he commenced—"What fortune, destiny,  
At last has brought thee to this lower world?  
And who is he who has the path unfurled?"  
"Yonder above, in life that is serene,"  
Replied I, "in a valley was I lost,  
Before mine age had felt th' approaching frost.  
Yester-morn my shoulders turned I away,  
This one appeared at first-commencing bourne."  
And he to me—"If you pursue your star,  
A glorious port cannot but follow this,  
Unless thy life's fair page I read amiss.  
And were I not untimely thus deceased,  
Seeing so kind to thee benignant heaven,  
To help your work should I have comfort given.  
But that ungrateful and malignant race,  
Displays from Fiesole its old descent—  
Like the rude mountain, and the rugged flint,  
Even for your merit proves adverse to thee.  
And reason, will, how can the sour crabs suit,  
Or grow beside the sweet fig's pleasant fruit?  
An ancient fame in world reports them blind—  
Race envious and avaricious, proud :  
See that thou cleanse thee from such manners' cloud !  
Thy fortune honour such reserves for thee ;  
For thee one and other party hungereth.  
But keep the herb beyond the wild goat's teeth :  
Let Fiesolan beasts make litter of themselves,  
Not of plant the juices of the spring fill,



If but one arise upon their dunghill,  
In which revives the sacred seed of those  
Of Roman race who there remained at rest,  
When of such malice it was made the nest."  
"Of all my wish could I receive full scope,"  
I said, "you would not be, as now, a man  
Beneath the world and under nature's ban ;  
For fixed within the mind, it now aggrieves  
Thy dear good image of paternal care,  
Such as thou wert in world, my teacher, where  
Eternity thou taught'st, and sacred fear ;  
And, while I live, 'tis meet the tongue you taught  
Should keep remembrance of the lesson wrought.  
The course I follow now, narrated soon,  
I will preserve, review its character,  
With one who 'll know 't if I arrive at her ;  
For such desire I have to manifest  
The conscious truth, and not myself deceive.  
If fortune, favour, ready to receive,  
This gentle earnest is not new to me.  
But Fortune roll her wheel still up and down  
As pleases her, his mattock ply the clown."  
My master then on the right cheek turned him  
Backward, to see me and express his thoughts ;  
And then remarked—"He listens well who notes."  
Not even for this we stopped, discoursed the less  
With Sir Brunetto, and begged him to quote  
Companions the chief, and of the most note.  
And he to me—"To know of some were good,  
Of others to be silent laudable,—  
All to name the time is scarcely able.

To sum the matter, all of these were clerks,  
Great in literature and of mighty fame :  
One sin there is that constitutes their shame.  
Priscian goes with the miserable crowd ;  
Francesco, Accorso's son, may be seen—  
To see such blot if any wish has been.  
Even him you might have seen, by servants' servant  
From Arno taken to Bacchilion—  
Abused, corrupted nerves to leave alone.  
More I could speak of, but no longer speech,  
Nor travel ; yonder I see, across the land,  
A new mist rising from the distant sand :  
A company comes with whom I must not be.  
Let me my *Treasure* recommend to thee,  
In which I still survive. Grant this to me.”  
He turned as if he were of those to run,  
To try their speed across Verona's plain,  
For the green mantle which the first will gain ;  
And in his gait and manner I could trace  
The one who conquers, not who's lost the race.

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## CANTO XVI.

IN place I was resounded, where the hum  
Of waters falling to the second round,  
Such as the bees make, a murmuring sound :  
When we beheld three shadows which departed,  
Running from troop which passed beneath the rain

Of fiery sorrow and of bitter pain.  
Towards us they came, and each one cried aloud—  
“Stay! By the habit in the which you stand,  
You are a native of our evil land.”  
Alas! the old and recent scars I saw,  
The fire stamped in and burnt upon their members,  
Unabated edge of grief remembers.  
“Attend to these,” my teacher cried—“attend!”  
He turned his face toward me: “Here remain,  
True courtesy to show, nor speech restrain.”  
And were it not the arrowy shower  
Forbids advance, then surely I should deem,  
To look that haste became thee more than them.  
When, as they stopped, they recommenced their strain;  
And when they reached still nearer to our bound,  
All three then wheeled, and formed a circling round.  
Like as the naked champions, smeared with oil,  
Look for their hold, for vantage watching stand,  
Before they close in struggle on the sand;  
Thus wheeled, directed every one his face  
To me, the feet at variance with the neck.  
The one advanced, the other still looked back.  
“And if the misery of this hollow place  
Turn to despite ourselves, and e’en our prayers,”  
Said he, “and visage which the burning sears,  
Oh, let our fame incline thy mind to say  
Who art thou, to imprint thy living feet  
So safely on th’ infernal tracks you meet?  
He whose fresh footmarks you behold me trace,  
Thus naked and despoiled of all, to grieve,  
Was one of greater rank than you’d believe:

Grandson was he of Gualdarada good ;  
His name was Guidoguerra when he lived—  
Enough with sense as well as sword achieved.  
Nearer, the one whose footsteps press the sand,  
Tegghiaio Aldobrandi, whose voice  
Acceptance might have met, and favoured choice.  
This post of torment I who keep with them  
Jacopo Rusticucci was ; and sure,  
More fierce the wife who could her mate immure.”  
Had I been sheltered from the fire, I would  
Have thrown myself beneath among the three—  
I think the teacher would have suffered me.  
But as I should have been both burned and scorched,  
The terror conquered thus the good desire,  
Which made me to embrace them once aspire.  
Then I commenced—“’Tis not despite, but grief,  
Which your condition fixed within my breast—  
So much, it cannot soon dislodge the guest.  
As soon as my master had informed me,  
In words by which I judged, before you came,  
What you might be, I’ve found you now the same.  
Of your own land am I, and evermore  
Your deeds and honoured names, when mentioned there,  
Affection’s self would trace, affection hear.  
I leave the gall, go through the apples sweet,  
Promised by leader true, with whom I wend ;  
But to the centre I must first descend.”  
“May spirit long accompany your limbs,”  
Replied he then, “and may th’ enduring mind  
Shine after death, and leave your fame behind.  
Do courtesy and valour inhabit yet—

For these were once within the city found—  
Or have they cast these inmates quite beyond ?  
Guiglielmo Borsiere grieves us now,  
Who lately joined our company, with words  
Which added torments to our pains affords.”  
“The new-come people, and the sudden gains,  
In thee, O Florence ! have produced excess  
And pride, the double source of thy distress :”  
Thus I exclaimed with elevated face.  
These three, who thought it was mine answer, sooth,  
Looked on each other as one looks at truth :  
“If only this it cost another time,”  
Replied they all, “to answer questions asked,  
Happy is he who has so slightly tasked.  
Of these same places, if you ’scape the plains,  
Returning to review the beauteous stars,  
Recount with pleasure, while attention hears,  
And tell our stories to the people’s ears.”  
Then broke the wheel, began to use their feet,  
Their limbs appeared like wings, they were so fleet ;  
There was not space to utter one amen,  
So suddenly from out our sight withdrew.  
At which the master chose to move anew,  
To follow I ; nor had we wandered far  
Before the sound of waters came more near,  
That, when we talked, ourselves we scarce could hear.  
Within its channel so that river runs,  
From Mount Vesuli as to south inclines,  
Descending left side of the Appenines,  
Stream which on high is Acquacheta named ;  
From thence it plunges to its lower bed,

Arrives at Forli, where the name is dead ;  
Re-echoing falls above Saint Benedict ;  
From out the Alps to reach one channel seems,  
Might separate there into a thousand streams.  
From a steep bank 'twas thus descending down,  
Resounding near the tintured waters crossed,  
Which stunned the sense, to hearing almost lost.  
I had a cord, with it was cinctured round,  
With which, on one occasion, I had thought  
The wild and painted leopard to have caught.  
When once the whole of it I had unwound,  
In prompt obedience to my guide's command,  
Gathered and coiled, I gave it to his hand.  
To the right side, from thence, himself he turned,  
And, at a little distance from the brink,  
Discharged it down the precipice to sink.  
Some new thing sure to this must needs reply.  
'Twas thus I hailed myself, the novel sign,  
My master seemed to follow with his eyne.  
And, ah ! what caution should men use with those  
Who look not at the deed alone in aught,  
But with the sense can penetrate the thought.  
" 'Twill soon," said he to me, " appear above,  
What I expect ; and what your fancy dreams,  
To be discovered soon it well beseems."  
To truth like that which falsehood's face assumes,  
Ought man to shut his lips, nor tell the same :  
Without the fault we may incur the shame.  
No silence here ; and by the notes I swear  
Of this same comedy, thou hast pursued,  
So may they be with lengthened grace endued !

That through thick air, through atmosphere obscure,  
I saw approaching figure swim above,  
There's not a heart that marvel would not move.  
As he returns who has been down beneath  
Some time t' unloose the anchor from a rock,  
Or aught entangling in the ocean's lock,  
Extends himself above, regains his feet."

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## CANTO XVII.

"BEHOLD the wild beast, with the deadly tail,  
Who passes mountains, shatters walls and arms !  
Lo ! he who all the world infects with harms !"  
To accost me my leader thus began,  
And made a sign that he should come to edge,  
Close to the end of marbled causeway ledge.  
Then came the vile similitude of fraud,  
The head, the living bust arrived before,  
But then the tail he drew not to the shore.  
His face was like the face of man who 's just,  
On outer skin benignity might rest ;  
Of body naught, but serpent all the rest.  
Two hairy claws, as far as armpits went,  
The back and breast and both the sides were stained  
With jointed nobes, and orbèd spots engrained—  
More so, not robe of Tartars or of Turks,  
Nor painted thus the web Arachne works.  
As oftentimes the barks stand by the beach,

Part on the shore and partly on the tide,  
As, where Tedeschian greedy tribes reside,  
The beaver settles to conduct its war,  
On curbing stone the beast was seen to stand,  
Just where the rocky margin bound the sand.  
In the void space his length of tail he reared,  
Wreathing above the venomèd, forkèd joint,  
Which, like the scorpion's, had an armèd point.  
The leader said—"Now it is right to turn  
Our way a little, where the evil beast  
On yonder spot has couched himself to rest."  
By the right pap, on we descended then,  
Retired ten paces from the edge extreme,  
To keep at distance from the sand and flame.  
And when at length we had arrived at them,  
A little on, I saw upon the sand  
A people set beside the narrowed land.  
"The full experience of this gyre," said he,  
"In order that you may receive, when seen,  
Go now and mark the nature of their mien ;  
But your discourses, let them be but short :  
Ere you return, with him I shall converse,  
To see if he will grant his shoulder's force."  
Thus onward still, unto extremest head  
Of seventh gyre, with solitary pace  
I went to where they sat, unhappy race !  
Their sorrow then was bursting from their eyes ;  
From here to there they succoured with the hands,  
—From vapours now, and now from hotter sands—  
Not otherwise than when the dogs are seen  
With jaw at one time, now with teeth, when bit



By gnats, or flies, or gadflies, in the heat.  
Some few to mark, when I had set mine eyes  
On whom the dolorific fire came down,  
I saw, though not a soul to me was known,  
That at the neck of each there hung a pouch,  
With certain colour, certain sign impressed,  
On which their eyes, it seems, could find repast.  
And as, regarding, I went through the band,  
A yellow purse I saw, and azure o'er 't,  
Which of a lion had the face and port.  
My glance proceeding then, in course, around  
Another saw, which was as red as blood,  
On which, whiter than curd, a white goose stood.  
And one that had a swine, azure and fat,  
As sign impressed upon his whitish scrip,  
Addressed me thus, "Why art thou in this deep?  
Go forward now, since thou art yet alive;  
My neighbour here, you are to understand,  
Vitaliano, sits on my right hand,  
'Mongst Florentines—I am a Paduan.  
Ofttimes their speech re-echoes in my ear,  
And cries, 'Come! come! thou noble cavalier!  
Upon whose pouch the three goats will appear!'"  
And here his mouth, distorted and along,  
Like ox to lick his nostrils lolled his tongue.  
And fearing lest my lengthened stay should vex  
Him who had charged me shortly to sojourn,  
From the lost spirits I began to turn.  
I found my master already mounted  
On the fierce animal, on the croup his hold,  
Addressed me then—"Now, be thou strong and bold.

Ascend thou now, and climb the perfect scales—  
Mount before, for I would be in the midst—  
The harmful tail will thus by thee be missed !”  
Like one whom then has seized a shivering chill  
Of quartan ague, nails of fingers dead,  
Trembles all o’er if he beholds the shade,  
So fearful I became to hear his words.  
But tyrant shame e’en courage can afford,  
The servant ’s strong in presence of his lord.  
On the huge shoulders, then, I sat me down ;  
I wished to say, but found no utterance then,  
Lest I should fall, “ Embrace me if you can.”  
But he, who I remember once before  
Had raised me, held me now aloft again,  
And kept his arms around me to sustain,  
And said, “ Geryon, now ’tis time to move ;  
Make large wheels, gently to descend take care ;  
And think of the new burden which you bear.”  
As a boat issues from the place where moored,  
Backing and backing out of narrow way,  
Until the open space give room to play,  
Where his breast was, he now had turned the tail,  
Extended like an eel in motion, leapt  
And filled with air the paddling claws he swept.  
More fear prevailed not, I imagine, when  
From Phaëton the reins abandoned fell,  
Of conflagration caused, the heavens can tell.  
Thus sad Icarus, his loins unwinged, perceived  
The wax dissolving in the blaze of day,  
His father crying, “ You take the wrong way.”  
Such I, when I beheld on every side

The air alone, and vanished from my view  
Aught else except the beast on which we flew.  
Advancing he, and sailing onward slow,  
Wheels his descent : observed it not my mind,  
But on my face I felt th' ascending wind.  
Now on the right hand in the whirling gorge,  
Beneath a sound, and horribly they dash.  
Mine eyes and head inclined I to the rush,  
More timid at the fires beside the fall,  
Which to my heart with lamentations sank,  
And made me, trembling, into little shrink.  
Then saw what I had not perceived before—  
Descent and winding way through mischiefs wide  
Approaching now from every different side.  
And as the falcon long upon the wing,  
When lure nor quarry ever met her sight,  
Makes falconer say, " Ah, stoop'st thou from thy flight ? "  
Descends to place whence nimbly she arose  
Through hundred wheels, at distance now to sit  
Her master from ; disdainful, in despite,  
Thus at the bottom placed us Geryon,  
On foot, at foot of rock and rifted stone,  
Our persons now no longer burdening,  
At once withdrew like arrow from the string.

## CANTO XVIII.

IN hell there is a place Malebolge called :  
'Tis all of stone, ferruginous in hue,  
E'en as the circle rocks around it threw.  
On the right centre of malignant plain,  
There yawns a gulf so mighty and profound  
I leave to leisure to describe its round.  
That circuit in its compass round remains,  
Between the gulf and foot of lofty steep,  
Whereon ten ramparts their foundations keep.  
Such is the prospect where, to guard the walls,  
Round castles ditch on ditch their cinctures make,  
And render strong position which they take—  
In such fashions were their labours formed.  
And as such fortresses, without their bound,  
Have little bridges to the bank beyond,  
Thus, from the lowest level of the rock,  
Ran crags to intersect each fosse and mole,  
Until the gulf cuts off, collects the whole.  
'Twas in that place, descended from the back  
Of Geryon, there found ourselves set down—  
The poet kept the left, I followed on.  
On my right hand new food for pity saw :  
The torments new, new officers of pains,  
Of which the first abyss a mass contains.  
Below, the naked sinners held the place ;  
From centre towards us set their feet to go  
To pace with us, with greater strides of woe.

The Romans thus, from army that arrives  
The bridge to cross, and in the Jubilee year,  
Devise a way to keep the passage clear—  
That on one side shall all who make their way,  
Go towards the castle and St Peter's front ;  
And on the other all go towards the mount.  
And here and there, along the rock obscure,  
Horned devils, with long whips, pursue the track,  
Who beat them cruelly upon their back.  
Anon it made them lift their legs at stroke  
The first—not one who could that first neglect,  
Or yet a second or a third expect.  
Mine eyes, as I proceeded, fixed on one  
I saw, I said when him I had descried,  
“ My appetite to see's not satisfied.”  
To view him better I restrained my feet,  
And my kind master also checked his speed—  
Time to turn backward gave me, and to heed.  
He thought, struck soul ! he had concealed himself—  
Bent down his visage : little it availed.  
I cried—“ Thou who to earth thine eye hast veiled,  
Unless the face you bear belie thyself,  
Venedico thou, Caccianimico—  
Who led thee to thy bitter-seasoned woe ? ”  
And he to me—“ Unwillingly I speak,  
Yet forces me to answer thy clear tongue—  
The language of the world I've left so long.  
'Twas I prevailed on Ghisola the fair,  
Conducted her to do the Marquis' will,  
Of which defeat the murmur lingers still.  
I who weep not the only Bolognese,

Rather the place is altogether full—  
So many tongues they teach not that are dull—  
“Sipa” ’tween Savena and the Reno.  
Of this the testimony to unfold,  
Recall to mind our eager thirst for gold.”  
Thus as he spoke, a demon struck with blow  
Of scourge—“Pandar, away ! pursue this line ;  
For here there are no women sold for coin.”  
My leader I rejoined, and then advanced  
A few steps onward, then our course to keep,  
Until we came to cliff advancing from the steep.  
With light alacrity we climbed its height,  
Turned to the right where splinter shelved away,  
And left the eternal circles of dismay.  
When we arrived beside the opening chasm,  
Which gave rough passage to the smitten race,  
My guide—“Attend, and let thine eye embrace  
The sight of other ill-born, wretched souls,  
Whose face as yet is strange unto thine eyes,  
Unnoted in the path behind which lies.”  
From ancient arch, we looked upon the train  
Advancing toward us from the other side,  
To whom the scourge had also been applied.  
The good master, before I asked him, said,  
“Regard that great one who is coming on,  
Who sheds no tear although by sadness won—  
Aspect how royal which he yet retains.  
Jason, whose heart and sense were of a piece,  
Deprived the Colchians of the famous fleece ;  
By isle of Lemnos in his voyage passed  
After bold women, cruelly combined,

Had all the males to bitter death consigned.  
There, with his signs with colour of his words,  
Deceived Hypsipyle in early youth,  
Who had deceived the rest with filial truth ;  
Left her with child in solitude to pine.  
To such a woe can such a fault consign.  
Here, too, Medea finds avenging sign.  
With him a company of like deceit :  
Of rampart first to know let this suffice,  
And those within tormented for their vice.”  
Already were we where the narrow path  
From first embankment would our steps betray,  
And a broad arch to second led the way.  
Here we perceived a race who murmured low  
In other gulf, and snorted with the nose ;  
With palms they struck themselves repeated blows—  
The banks were all o’ertopped with gathering scum,  
From exhalation low like paste was laid,  
And with the eyes and nose strange contest made.  
Hollow the depth to that degree that none  
Can see the place, without ascending where  
The back of rocky arch affords a stair.  
To that we came, and, in the fosse beneath,  
I saw a people plunged in kind of dung,  
Which seemed from human privies brought along.  
And while with eye I searched th’ expanse below,  
One, so defiled with excrement his head  
That clerk or layman I could not have said,  
Who cried to me, “ Why bendest so on me ?  
Why me regard ’st more than the other brutes ? ”  
“ Because your face my recollection suits ;

Before I've seen you, when your locks were dry :  
Thou art Alessio, and from Lucca's wall,—  
And therefore 'tis I view thee more than all."  
And then he beat himself upon the gourd,—  
"Down to this depth have flatteries me submerged,  
To slime of which my tongue had ever verged."  
My leader upon this, "Try to incline,"  
Said he, "till you more forward vision gain ;  
Until your eyes the face of her attain—  
Of that vile courtesan, the slave of sin,  
Herself who scratches with her dirty nails ;  
With bending limbs and then—her height unveils :  
This the bought harlot who the answer sent,  
'Have I great thanks with thee ?' In lover's tense  
The question was ; the answer was 'Immense.'  
Here let our sights be satisfied for once."

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## CANTO XIX.

O Simon Magus ! and all ye beside,  
The wretched followers of Simony,  
Who things of God, which were espoused to good,  
By gold and silver to adultery wooed,  
'Tis meet the trumpet now should sound o'er you,  
In the third gulf presented to our view.  
Already in the following vault we are :  
Aloft on rock a central station this—  
O'erarching now the midst of the abyss.



O highest Wisdom ! what a deal of art  
Is shown in heaven, and earth, and evil world !  
What just division has thy truth unfurled !  
I saw along the bottom, and the sides,  
The livid rock for ever loopholed through  
With large apertures, which are rounded too.  
Not less nor larger those were to my mind  
In my own San Giovanni's graceful dome,  
Fashioned at place to which baptisers come ;  
One of the which, not many years ago,  
I broke for one who would have drowned within—  
Let this be seal 'twas not intended sin.  
Beyond the mouth there was excrescence seen  
Of feet and legs of one condemned for sin—  
Up to the calf the rest was all within.  
The two soles were kindled altogether—  
Their joints they writhed with such excess of strength  
They would have broke the strongest withes at length.  
'Twas such as when oiled substances inflame,  
O'er the extreme surface lightly travels flame—  
Of soles, from heels to points, 'twas just the same.  
“ Who is he, master, that's tormented thus ?  
More than companions seems his limbs to strain—  
At ruddy flame who draws his breath for pain ? ”  
And he, “ Wouldst thou that I should carry thee  
Down to where yonder bank lies more along ?  
Of self he'll tell, and his contortions strong.”  
“ Such pleasure have I in what pleases thee,  
Thou art my lord, thou know'st I'll not depart  
From what you wish, and you can read my heart.”  
Unto the fourth embankment then we came ;

Turned, and descended to where left unrolls  
The base, o'erspread with perforated holes.  
And the good master from his haunch as yet  
Had not displaced me, to set down by him  
Lamenting for himself and for his limb.  
"Oh, thou ! whoe'er thou art, inverted thus,  
Sad spirit thus implanted like a stake,"  
Began I, "if you can, some utterance make."  
Like a friar stood I who confesses  
The assassin treacherous, who when tied,  
Recalls him, death one moment more denied.  
And he cried out, "Already standest there ?  
Already art thou there, Bonifacio ?  
For years the writing seemed a lie to show.  
With that possession satisfied so soon,  
For which thou didst not fear to use such guile  
And lady fair with outrage to defile ?"  
In such a case was I as those who stand,  
Because they comprehend not what is said,  
In the horns of a dilemma without aid.  
Then Virgil said, "Tell him immediately,  
I am not he—not he whom you believe."  
Such I received, and such the answer gave.  
The spirit then began to writhe his feet,  
Then sighing, and with weeping voice, t' exclaim,  
"Then my attention wherefore didst thou claim ?  
If to know who I am is your desire,  
And this the cause that led thee to come down,  
Then know that once I wore the royal gown.  
I was in truth the son of the She-bear :  
Anxiety to advance my whelps by wealth

Has placed me here ; I filled my purse in stealth.  
Beneath my head the others are dragged down,  
Before my day, by Simony debased,  
And therefore in the rocky fissure placed.  
Down here below another time I'll fall,  
When he shall come, the one you seemed to be,  
When at the first I questioned suddenly.  
Longer the time in which I'm scorching here,  
And down beneath, with heels thus overhead,  
Than that in which he 'll stand with foot-soles red.  
The work more ugly after him will be.  
From out the west will lawless shepherd come,  
So far as to o'erpass both me and him :  
Like a new Jason he, of whom we read  
In Maccabees, to whom his king was mild ;  
Thy monarch, France, will treat him as his child."  
And here I know not but I might be rash,  
But at this point answer to him I made,  
" What treasure asked our Lord, when he conveyed  
Unto Saint Peter's charge the keys to grasp ?  
Naught : sure he left it all for time to clasp.  
Peter nor others from Matthias asked  
Gold or silver, when chosen by lot in room  
Of wicked soul, who went to meet his doom.  
Stand, therefore, where due punishment you meet—  
Guard well the ill-got treasure you have gained,  
In contest with the hardy Charles obtained.  
Had not the reverence which yet remains  
For the high keys of office, that you held  
In happy life, my boldness now repelled,  
Expressions I should use of deeper tone.

This avarice of yours the world makes sad ;  
It tramples on the good, sustains the bad.  
Of such a Shepherd when the Evangelist thought  
Was she who sits upon the waters, seen  
Committing fornication with each king—  
She who with the seven heads takes her birth,  
And from the ten horns had her powerful state,  
Long as her worthiness could please her mate.  
Of gold and silver you have made your god,  
Idols of yours and others to recount,  
Theirs to one, to a hundred yours amount.  
Ah, Constantine ! what mischief in the gift—  
Not thy conversion, but the dower you gave  
For the first wealthy Father to receive.”  
And while to him in notes like these I sang,  
Anger or conscience made his thoughts retreat—  
Made him spin strongly round on both his feet.  
My guide, I well believe, it satisfied,  
With such contented lip he still would list—  
Sound of true words my language had expressed.  
With both, then, of his hands he caught me up,  
And when he had lifted me to his breast,  
The way we had descended we retraced ;  
Nor so fatigued with weight—he had embraced,  
Until the arch’s culminating point  
Of bastion fourth and fifth connecting joint.  
With gentleness he set his burden down  
Upon the steep and rugged arch’s crown—  
No easy passage to the climbing goat :  
Another vale here came within my note.

## CANTO XX.

OF new pains to me, fit theme of verses,  
To give material to twentieth canto  
Of the first song of world submerged in woe.  
I was now quite disposed, as far 's I could,  
Of covered vault the pavement to descry,  
All bathed with weeping from the anguished eye.  
Through hollow rampart I beheld a race,  
Silent, and weeping at each step they took,  
Such as when making litanies they look.  
My eye descended lower through the crowd :  
A marvel there appeared ; for, turned around,  
From collar-bone to chin, was each one found.  
Thus from the reins their aspect turned away,  
And, when walking, needs must they backward go,  
Since to look forward sight would not allow.  
By force of paralysis might a man  
Distorted be : if ever such there were,  
I never saw ; nor do I think there are.  
If God allow thee, reader, take the fruit  
Of reading this, and ponder in thy mind.  
To such a sight as this could I be blind ?—  
To see our image, and, besides, so near,  
Reverted thus ; and view the tearful track,  
In furrows long, descending down the back ?  
Sore I lamented, leaning on a rock,  
A rough-planed crag, until my guide addressed  
The words—“ Are you, too, foolish like the rest ?

Here Pity is alive, e'en when quite dead.  
And what can be more wicked than the man  
Who 'gainst heaven's justice in his passion ran ?  
Direct the head, direct it now, and see  
The Theban's eyes which saw the earth split—crush."  
And a universal cry, ' Wherefore rush  
You, Amphiaraus ? why desert the war ?'  
The downward path of ruin did not cease,  
Till Minos' vault, who marks for each his place.  
Mark, now his breast is where the shoulders are ;  
For to look farther forward than is meet,  
Has made him look behind, his walk retreat."  
I saw Tiresias' countenance, who changed—  
From masculine to feminine he ranged,  
Of frame converting every joint and hinge.  
And first he had two serpents to repress  
At once with rod, when striving to renew  
The feathers male, escaping from the view.  
Aruns I saw, with belly now behind.  
Once Luni's mountains, where Carrara's hind  
Hews with his axe, a welcome shelter gave,  
'Mid the white marbles, where he found a cave  
To lodge in, and from whence to view the stars,  
The sea's bright prospect, which his sight regards.  
And she whose back-hair floats upon her breasts,  
Dishevelled tresses, intercepts the view,  
And o'er her face their growing mantle threw.  
Manto was she : through many a land she strayed,  
Reposes in the land where I was born—  
Then listen for a while, nor feel forlorn.  
After her sire had issued from this life,

And Bacchus' city into slavery came,  
Long through the world she gained a wandering name.  
In Upper Italy a lovely lake  
Lies by the Alps, which Germany confine.  
The Tyrol passed, Benacus' waves combine  
With thousand fountains, then it bathes the land  
'Twixt Garda, Canonica, Apennine.  
With waves which o'er its ruffled surface shine,  
Midway a spot—the Trentine pastor there  
And he of Brescia, and the Veronese,  
One common path might follow at their ease—  
Peschiera stands, a fortress strong and good,  
Frontier 'tween Brescians and the Bergamesks,  
Where sinks the bank and its descending masks.  
And there it cannot be but that the streams,  
Benacus' ample bosom which o'erpass,  
Like rivers run through all the pasture grass.  
There, as the water glides along its course,  
No more Benacus, but the Mincio,  
Reaches Governo, falls into the Po.  
Not long it travels till it finds a place  
O'er which it spreads, and stagnates in a marsh,  
Then eagerly absorbs, no more to search.  
Passing from thence, the unripe virgin found  
A land at last, in midst of a morass—  
A wild, uncultured, and unpeopled mass,  
To fly from all society of man.  
With household there, and household arts, remained ;  
Her form of vanity that land retained.  
But when the men were scattered all around,  
They gathered after to the strongest place,



On every side defended by morass.  
O'er her dead bones a city then they raised,  
From her who first selected, gave the name ;  
Without farther lot, Mantua it became.  
The people now within more numerous grew,  
When Casalodi's madness was to meet  
From Penamonte's guile a due defeat.  
I have informed thee, lest that thou shouldst hear  
My country's origin another way,  
And falsehood for a time the truth betray.  
And I, " Master, your reasonings to me  
Are sure, in thee implicit my belief—  
The rest, cold ashes or the withered leaf.  
But tell me of the race which now proceeds.  
Seest thou not one that's worthy of remark ?—  
To this alone attentively I hark."  
And then he said, " He from whose cheek you see  
O'er his brown shoulders the descending beard—  
When Greece dispeopled of its males appeared,  
That even the cradles scarcely could escape,  
Augur was with Calchas : he gave sign of yore—  
In Aulis cut the cable from the shore ;  
Eurypilus was his name, and so I sang  
Somewhere, in lofty tragedy of mine—  
Thou know'st it well who know'st the whole confine.  
That other one, so narrow in the flanks,  
Was Michael Scott ; and, to repeat what's true,  
The magic frauds and all the game he knew.  
Guido Bonatti see, Asdente,  
Fain would they tend the thread and cordwain yet  
As once, but now repentance comes too late."



I saw the race who left the needle's skill,  
The shuttle and the spindle, to divine,  
With herbs and image, sorceries to combine.  
"But come, see how e'en now they grasp the bounds  
Of two hemispheres, touch Guadalquiver ;  
Under Seville Cain's thorns you discover.  
But yesternight the moon, you saw, was round ;  
You may remember how it hurt thee not,  
Erewhile when wandering by the wild-wood's root."  
Spoke thus, then onward moved we both afoot.

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CANTO XXI.

FROM bridge to bridge, discoursing then of more  
Than this my comedy to sing may care,  
We reach the summit of the rocky stair.  
Restrained our feet, another fissure saw  
Of Malebolge—heard other vain laments,  
And saw what marvellous obscure presents.  
As in Venetian arsenal you 'll see  
The pitch in winter boiling by the tides,  
To daub afresh the weather-beaten sides  
Unfit for sea ; and at the self-same time  
One frames his hulk and one renews the ribs  
Of bark intended to make other trips :  
One knocking at the prow, and one at poop ;  
Others make oars, and others twist the rope ;  
Some with mizen, some with mainsail cope.

Such, not from fire, but from an art divine,  
Low boiled the viscous resin of the pine.  
I looked beneath but could distinguish naught,  
Except the bubbles and the boiling tide,  
Which swallowed all and would again subside.  
And while with fixed gaze I looked beneath,  
“ Look here—look here !”—my master called aloud,  
And drew me to himself from where I stood.  
I turned myself like one who ’s forced to wait  
To see some object which he fain would shun :  
When sudden fear the fortress will unman,  
To see will scarce induce him to remain.  
I looked behind and saw a devil black,  
Running along the sharp and rocky track.  
Alas ! in his aspect how fierce he was !  
To me he seemed in action how severe,  
With open wings, and light of foot, drew near.  
Acute—superb his lofty shoulder was,  
To bear the haunches of a sinner meet :  
Griped the flexile sinews of whose feet.  
“ Ye evil talons of our bridge,” he cried,  
“ One of St Zita’s elders here I bore—  
Plunge him beneath, while I return for more.  
Beneath that country which is furnished well  
With all who ever bartered public weal,  
With money bought their Yes and No to sell,  
Save Bonturo.” O’er the hard rock he threw,  
And turned him ; and never mastiff was so swift  
To follow thief, or pounce upon the theft.  
He plunged beneath, then upward turned again ;  
But demons cried in archway from their lair,

“The holy head can work no wonders here—  
This swimming ’s different from the Serchio :  
If on our hooks you do not wish to hitch,  
Appear not, then, above tenacious pitch.”  
Then fastened on him with their hundred hooks,  
And said, “Here you must mask if you would play ;  
Then hide thee in the pitch, as well you may.”  
Not otherwise the cooks will tell their grooms  
In midst of boiling caldron meat to sop,  
With flesh-hooks plunge it lest it swim at top.  
The guide, “In order that it may not seem  
That you are here, crouch down behind that cliff—  
Something of shelter at the least ’twill give ;  
And for offence that may be done to me,  
Fear not, nor think they’ll execute their ill—  
I was once before in such a quarrel.”  
When he had passed from thence from head of bridge,  
His steps to sixth embankment to inure,  
Then need there was to have a front secure.  
With that fury, that tempestuous rage,  
That the dogs rush upon a poor man’s breast,  
Who stopped and at the moment made request,  
From underneath the bridge at once they sprung,  
And then against him brandished all their prongs.  
He cried, “Abate your fierceness and your wrongs ;  
Before you come to strike me with your hooks,  
Let one advance—hear what I have to say—  
Improng me after counsel, if you may.”  
They all cried out, “Go then, Malacoda.”  
Then moved the one, and all the rest stood firm.  
Addressing him, “And what prevents thy harm ?”

“Think’st, Malacoda, thou wouldst see me here  
So far,” my master said, “without the power  
To shelter me from all the hurts that lower—  
Without the will divine, propitious fate?  
Let us proceed, for so He willèd hath  
That I should show one by this wooded path.”  
Then all his haughtiness at once has fallen,  
So that he dropped the weapon on the ground,  
And said to others, “Him we cannot wound.”  
Then guide to me, “O thou! who sittest there,  
Amid the cliff abutments crouching low,  
You may securely come and join me now”—  
Which made me move, and go to him direct.  
The devils all moved forward in their act:  
Would they, I thought, adhere to their compact?  
Infantry have I seen thus once in fear  
Caprona leave—forced to capitulate—  
March in the midst of enemies so great.  
I quickly gained close contact to my guide,  
Nor yet mine eyes to swerve from them allowed,  
And looked on countenances far from good.  
Their hooks pushed forward, “Shall I strike?” says one  
To other—“Shall I strike him on the hip?”  
Replied they, “Yes, nor let your weapon slip.”  
But then the demon who exchanged speech  
With my leader, turned him about so soon,  
And said, “Stay now—stay now, Scaramiglion.”  
Then said to us, “Farther you cannot go  
On by this rock—the footing it betrays,  
For arch the sixth is shivered at the base.  
If further forward you are pleased to go,

Up by this grotto still proceed you may,  
To where a rock will then disclose the way.  
Yesterday, five hours later than this hour,  
Full twelve hundred sixty-six years ago,  
Since here was broken way across the stone.  
Towards that point despatch I some of mine,  
To see if any one is basking there :  
Go with them ; there's no wickedness to fear.  
Come forward, Alichino, Calcabrina,  
And thou, Cagnazzo,"—thus to say began,—  
"And thou, Barbariccia, conduct the ten ;  
Libicocco, come, and Draghinazzo,  
Fanged Ciriatto, and mad Rubican,  
And Farfarello, and fierce Graffican :  
All ye, explore around the boiling mess—  
Let these be safe unto the rock that runs  
Unintermitting o'er the hollow dens."  
"O master !" said I, "what a sight is this !  
Without an escort shall we go alone ?  
Know you the way ?—for me, I covet none,  
Even should you be as prudent as you're wont.  
Mark how they gnash upon us with their teeth,  
And with their eyebrows threaten instant death."  
And he—"I would not you should be afraid.  
Let them frown, grin as often as they please ;  
'Tis all against the creatures ill at ease."  
Each turned him by embankment on the left ;  
But first had every one compressed his tongue  
With teeth, for signal from their leader long,  
And he had blown his trumpet from behind.

## CANTO XXII.

I HAD ere this seen cavalry move camp,  
Commence to charge, their mustered squadron meet,  
And once or twice departing in retreat ;  
Light horse have seen patrolling through your land ;  
Oh, Aretines, seen the armed warriors wheel,  
Tilt in tournaments, and in the joust to reel,  
Sometimes with trumpets, and sometimes with bells,  
With sound of drums and signals from castells,  
And with our own and such as stranger tells ;  
But never yet to such a bugle-sound  
Saw I the cavalry or foot to move,  
Nor ship to mark of land or star above.  
We went advancing with the ten demons :  
(Ah ! fierce company !) In the church with saints,  
With gluttons in taverns, human nature haunts.  
Now o'er the pitch I stood with look intent,  
To see each object which the gulf immured,  
And all who had the burning heat endured.  
To mariners as dolphins signal make,  
Whose back o'erarches all the sea-foam's drip,  
A warning argument to save their ship ;  
In like manner, to alleviate pain,  
Above the surface would each sinner dash,  
And hide himself in less than lightning's flash.  
Thus at water-line of fosse or moat  
Stand frogs, the jaw without, for 'tis their art  
To hide the feet and all the thicker part.

And so on every side the sinners stood ;  
But soon as Barbariccia approached,  
The boiling flood o'er all of them encroached.  
I saw—my feelings yet uprouse my hair—  
That one was waiting, like one frog apart,  
Who stays when next has chosen to depart ;  
And Graffican, right over against him,  
Entangling, seized him by the clotted hair,  
And drew him up as if it were an otter.  
I knew already almost all by name,  
As I had marked them chosen at the first,  
And afterwards how each had each addressed.  
“O Rubican ! see you imprint them all  
Upon his back, and flay him if you can !”  
Cried altogether each accursèd one.  
And I—“Master, please you to ascertain  
Who is that wretched one so ill at ease,  
Fallen into the hands of adversaries.”  
My master went nearer, approached his side ;  
And he replied to “Who and whence you are ?”  
“I was born in the kingdom of Navarre.  
Servant my mother placed me to a lord—  
For she had borne me to a ribald elf,  
Destroyer of his goods and of himself—  
Then in family of good King Theobald.  
Here for my peculation is my lot :  
Accounts I render in this burning hot.”  
And Ciriatto, from whose mouth a tusk  
Issued on each side, as from mouth of boar,  
Ripped him up at once, and opening tore :  
The mouse had fallen into evil claws.

Barbariccia closed in with him with arms—  
“Apart ! while I transfix him with my arms.”  
Towards my master then he turned his face :  
“Inquire if aught you would, while time’s delayed,  
And learn of him ere he’s again unmade.”  
The guide—“Now, then, of the wicked souls,  
Know’st thou if any be of Latin race  
Under the pitch ?” And he—“’Tis but a space  
Since one I quitted who adjoined that place.  
Would that I were still underneath with him,  
To feel nor hook nor talon in my limb !”  
And Libicocco—“We have borne too much !”  
Cried out, and arm he grappled with his hook,  
And bore away the muscular he took.  
Draghinazzo had wished to make a dart  
At legs beneath, which made Decurion start,  
Turn round and round, and take a threatening part.  
And when they were a little pacified,  
Of him who gazing on his wound would stay,  
My leader asked, without the least delay—  
“Who was that thou partedst from by ill luck,  
And left to come ashore to these a prey ?”  
And he replied—“The friar Gomita—  
He of Gallura, vessel of all fraud,  
Who had his master’s enemies in hand,  
And used them so their praises to command—  
Money he took, and let them all go free.  
Said so : in other charges you might see  
A peculator sovereign in degree.  
With him consorts donno Michel Zanche  
Of Logodoro ; and of Sardinia



They tire not, still have something more to say.  
Alas ! behold that other, how he grins !  
I would say more, but much I fear that he  
Is now preparing himself to beat me.”  
And the chief then turned to Farfarello,  
Who rolled his orbèd eyes with threat’ning light,  
And said—“ Begone, thou bird of evil sight !”  
“ If you have any wish to see or hear,”  
Began he, disconcerted by his fear,  
“ Tuscans or Lombards I will make appear ;  
But let the evil talons now be still,  
So that their vengeance for a time I shun.  
While I remain here, in this place alone,  
For one I will make seven to appear  
When I shall whistle now, if you allow ;  
For so we call each other from below.”  
Cagnazzo at the word his nostril raised,  
Shook head—“ Hear what malice he proposeth :  
He has the thought to plunge himself beneath.”  
Upon which he who had great store of toils,  
“ Malicious I must be to great excess,  
When I procure myself still more distress.”  
Alichin could not refrain himself, and  
Said, “ I will not gallop after thee to clutch,  
But I will beat my wings above the pitch.  
Let us leave high ground, and let bank be shield,  
And see if all to thee alone must yield.”  
O thou who readest, thou shalt hear new sport !  
Each to the other side directs his eyes ;  
He who at first was slower to do it,  
The Navarrese, selected well his time,

Planted his foot on earth, and, at a leap,  
Their purpose disappointed by escape.  
Compunction then for fault seized every one,  
But him the most who was the cause of fault ;  
Which made him spring the first, and cry, "You're caught."  
But little it availed : suspect is strong  
Of wing beneath : the one went on at rest,  
And other steered his flight with upward breast.  
Not otherwise the water-fowl in chase,  
Perceiving falcon near, will dive direct,  
And he return, tormented and hope-wrecked.  
Calcabrina, at mockery enraged,  
And disappointed of the fray presaged,  
And as the barrator had disappeared,  
His talons directed 'gainst companion,  
Grappling above the fosse with him alone.  
The other was a thorough sparrow-hawk,  
To strike with talons : ere from each they break,  
Together fell in midst of boiling lake.  
The hot made sudden seizure of them both.  
To raise themselves again a thing of naught,  
Their pinions so entangled and enwrought.  
Barbariccia, with his troop, lamenting,  
Sent four along to fly from other side  
With all their weapons, expedition tried.  
Now here, now there, descending to the post,  
Pushed forward prongs to reach the glutinous pair,  
Now burning inward from each outward scar.  
And so we left them all embroiling there.

## CANTO XXIII.

SILENT, alone, and without company,  
Advanced we, one before and one behind,  
Like minor friars to the way inclined.  
To Æsop's fable recollection turned  
From present quarrel, when the thought arose  
To where he speaks of frog that carried mouse :  
Word corresponds not so to kindred word,  
As one to other mutually replies  
The origin and end, to thoughtful eyes.  
As one thought from another is let loose,  
So from that thought another came to light,  
Which now redoubled all my former fright.  
My thought was this : these have been mocked by us—  
Have met with hurt as well as ridicule—  
Which must, I think, annoy them to the full.  
If anger and ill-will their force combine,  
More cruelly they'll come, affront to wipe,  
Than greyhound to the leveret in his gripe.  
Already felt I hair stand all on end  
For fear ; on looking back I was intent,  
When I said—" Master, if your mind 's not bent  
To hide yourself and me, I greatly fear  
Evil talons already in the wind—  
Imagination puts them close behind."  
And he—" Were I of leaden, crystallised glass,  
Thy imaged thought could not so swiftly go  
As that which here imprinted is. I know

Thy thoughts are mirrored when they blend with mine :  
Of likeness both in act and face partake,  
So that from two one counsel I can make.  
And if it be that here the right inclines  
To other gulf, to which we can descend,  
Imagined fear will find a welcome end.”  
Scarce was his purposed counsel rendered, when  
I saw them follow with extended wing,  
And fast approaching, on their prey to spring.  
My leader, on a sudden, took me up,  
As mother when the rumours reach her ears,  
And in her path the kindled flame appears ;  
Who takes her son and flies, and never stops—  
More care of him than thought of self supplies—  
Robed but in one chemise, the mother flies.  
Already, from the neck of rock so hard,  
Shot down to where a hanging rock divides  
From neighbouring gulf one of the nearer sides.  
Never so swift ran water through the lead  
Of land-mill when it runs to turn the wheel,  
And just before the floats the current feel,  
As o’er that narrow edge my master ran.  
Me he sustained, and bore his breast upon,  
As his own son, not as his companion.  
Scarce had feet touched the gulf’s foundation-bed,  
Over above us, when they joined the hill.  
But all suspect or terror now was still ;  
For the high Providence which made them serve  
In the fifth fosse, as ministers to roam,  
Made it impossible to quit their home.  
Down there we came upon a painted race,

Circling as they moved, advancing toward,  
Weeping countenance, tired and overpowered.  
Caps they had on, and all with hoods set down  
Before their eyes, such is their cut, it sinks,  
As at Cologne they make them for the monks.  
Were gilded all without with dazzling sheen ;  
But he their leaden weight within who saw,  
Would think that Frederick's mantles were of straw :  
The robe, alas ! eternal of fatigue.  
To the left hand we turned, with these intent  
To walk beside, and hear their sad complaint.  
But, through the heavy weight, the weary race  
Came on so slow, at every step we took  
On a fresh company our eyes might look.  
And hence I said to guide,—“ Cannot you find  
Some one whose actions and whose name we know ?  
Direct your eyes around you as you go ! ”  
And one, who understood the Tuscan tongue,  
In way behind us, cried,—“ Restrain your feet,  
Ye who through twilight air can run so fleet !  
Perhaps you'll learn of me what you require ! ”  
And then my leader turned and said—“ Await !  
And to his pace accommodate your feet ! ”  
I stopped, and two I saw exhibit haste  
Of mind in face, and wish for me to wait—  
The load delayed them, and the pathway straight.  
When we had joined, with eye oblique enough  
On me they looked, not a word to utter,  
Then each turned to each and talked together :  
“ This one's alive, from action of the throat ;  
And, if they're dead, by what privilege could

They walk uncovered with the loaded hood ? ”  
Then said—“ O Tuscan ! to the college come  
Of the sad hypocrites, arrived from far,  
Disdain not now to tell us who you are ! ”  
And I to them—“ I was born and grew up  
On river Arno, at the noble town—  
The body which I always had I own.  
But who are ye from whom there so distils  
The grief which stains your cheek with frequent tears,  
And what the pain that kindles and appears ? ”  
And he replied to me—“ The orange caps  
Are made of lead so heavy to weigh down  
And shake the balances beneath the crown.  
The joyous friars we were, and Bolognese—  
Lodaringo this, Catalano I,  
Both taken from your land in Italy ;  
Accustomed as they are to take one man,  
To preserve its own peace, and such we were—  
And let Gardingo still for proof appear ! ”  
I commenced—“ O friars ! your misfortunes ! ”  
But said no more, for on my eyes there breaks  
One crucified on ground beneath three stakes,  
Who, when he saw me, grew distorted quite.  
His beard was shaking with repeated sighs,  
And Catalano, who remarked this, cries—  
“ That one transfixed, you’re gazing at, was he  
Who to the Pharisees expedient saith  
That for the people one be put to death.  
Athwart and naked lies he in the way,  
As you behold ; and ’tis, besides, his fate  
Of every passenger to prove the weight.

In like manner lies his father-in-law  
In this abyss, and all the councillors  
Who the Judæans led from bad to worse.”  
Then I beheld Virgilius, surprised,  
O’er him who was extended under cross,  
So vile beneath eternal exile’s loss.  
To friar then he spoke, in certain voice—  
“Displease it not, if lawful thee to say,  
If by right hand there ’s any outlet way,  
By which we both may issue out from hence—  
Encounter no dark angels on the road,  
Who may fall on us when from depth abroad.”  
“More than you could have hoped for, near,” he said,  
“A rock moves forward from the mighty round,  
And runs across each fearful bulwark’s ground—  
Save that ’tis shattered, and it has no cope—  
By that ruin climbing you may mount up,  
Which lies along and overhangs the deep.”  
The leader stood a space with head inclined,  
And then he said he must have told us wrong—  
He whom we saw hold sinners on his prong.  
And friar—“I’ve heard say at Bologna  
Much of the Devil’s vices : one implies—  
He’s a liar and the father of lies.”  
And then the guide with mighty stride passed on,  
Disturbed, a little anger in his look.  
Thence from the loaded I departure took,  
Behind each trace of his beloved steps.

## CANTO XXIV.

IN that division of the youthful year  
When in Aquarius his locks of fire  
The sun steeps, nights to equinox retire ;  
When the hoar-frost that's scattered o'er the land  
Puts on the image of his sister fair,  
But soon by 's milder sway 's dissolved in air ;  
The rustic poor with his exhausted store  
Rises, looks out, and then the country spies  
One whitened plain, which makes him smite his thighs ;  
Returns to house, lamenting to and fro,  
Like the poor wretch who knows not what to do ;  
Then smiles—hope in his bosom springs anew,  
Now that the world its countenance has changed :  
In portion of an hour he takes his crook,  
And out to pasture drives his little flock.  
Thus my master me enveloped in alarm,  
When I beheld disturbance rising high,  
And just as soon did lenitive apply.  
For as we came unto the ruined bridge,  
The leader turned to me with that regard  
Of sweetness, which I saw at mountain-ward ;  
Opened his arms after some counsel had  
Of ruin ; then, remarking well the dip,  
Considered for a while, and took me up.  
As one employed, who estimates before  
Each step he takes, providing by the way  
For difficulty, thus he lifted me



To top of rock another rock to see.  
Then said—"Get upon that, and grapple thee :  
See first if it will bear thee steadfastly."  
This was no pathway for the curtained cap ;  
We scarcely—he so light, and I sustained—  
From crag and cliff to crag and cliff attained  
Of bounding precinct, if it had not been  
The side was shorter than of other some.  
For him I know not—I was overcome.  
But Malebolge towards the gate inclines  
Of lowest depths in all its winding gyres ;  
And hence the site of every gulf requires  
One side to rise, another to descend.  
At last we reached the end that point upon  
From whence the last of all the rocks bends down.  
The breath was so exhausted in my lungs  
When it I reached, that I could do no more,  
But sat me down the contest to give o'er.  
"Henceforth you must abandon indolence,"  
My master said : "'tis not repose on plumes  
That leads to fame—nor yet in shady glooms ;  
Without the which if one consumes his life,  
E'en such a vestige upon earth he'll make  
As smoke in air, or foam on water's track.  
Then rouse thyself and conquer thy fatigue,  
With mind victorious in every battle,  
Unless the dull frame subdue its mettle.  
A longer ladder yet there is to climb.  
'Tis not enough to have escaped from those :  
Your understanding me compliance shows."  
I rose again as if I had more breath

Than what I felt within my bosom's hold,  
And said—"Go on, for I am strong and bold."  
Right up the rock we hold our journey now,  
Rugged, and strait, and difficult to get o'er,  
And steeper far than one we climbed before.  
On talking that I might not feeble seem,  
When from the other fosse there came a voice,  
Unsuitable to form expressions nice :  
I know not what it said, for on the ridge  
I was already of o'erpassing arch ;  
But strains of anger marked I. In my search,  
I turned to look below, but living eyes  
Could never pierce the depth of the obscure :  
"Master, 'tis right arrival to secure,  
From other circle to dismount the wall ;  
Hence as I list, naught I to sense can turn,  
So down I look and nothing can discern."  
The guide—"With naught else I answer thee  
But that to do ; for thus to fair request  
The deed should follow silently expressed."  
We from the bridge descended, from the head,  
Where to eighth bank it forms adjoining link,  
And then was all the gulf to me distinct.  
And there, within, terrible band I saw  
Of serpents, and so various in their gait,  
Still puts my memory, my blood to flight.  
Let Libya boast no longer of her sands,  
Nurse of Chalcidens, lancers, and Parees,  
Cencri, Amphisbene, of ophidian race—  
So great such evil pestilence not she  
Can show ; nor Ethiopia's utmost bound,

Nor all the spawn above the Red Sea found.  
Among this cruel, most afflicting crowd,  
Were running people naked in alarm ;  
No refuge there, nor heliotrope to charm.  
Behind had they their hands, with serpents bound ;  
And these, the reins transpiercing with the tail  
And head : knotted in twists they fell.  
And lo ! at one who then was by our side  
A serpent darted, who transpierced, and bit  
Just where the neck is to the shoulders knit.  
Nor O nor I so quickly could be writ  
As he enkindled, burned, and ashes all  
To earth poured out—could never choose but fall.  
And after thus dissolved on earth he lay,  
The ashes, gathering once more, return  
Into the self-same measure of the form.  
And thus, by greatest sages 'tis confessed,  
The Phoenix dies, and afterwards revives ;  
Near the five hundredth year again it lives :  
Nor herb nor grain its food in living hours,  
But incense and tears, Jerusalem rose so sweet,  
Spikenard, and myrrh, compose its winding-sheet.  
Like him who falls, and that he knows not how,  
By force of demon pulling to the ground,  
Or else obstruction which a man has found,  
Who, when at length he rises, looks around,  
Astounded quite with anguish and surprise  
At what he suffered, and regards and sighs—  
Such was the sinner who was risen up.  
Justice of God, how great, and how severe,  
Which hails its vengeance on transgressors here !

The leader then demanded who he was.  
“From Tuscany,” he said, “I rained at large  
A little since into this frightful gorge.  
My choice the bestial, not the human life,  
Mule that I was ! and Vanni Fucci then  
A beast, Pistoia was a proper den.”  
And I to leader,—“Tell him not to move.  
Ask what has pushed him to this downward span—  
I’ve seen the bloody and choleric man.”  
The sinner heard, but he pretended not ;  
To me directed both his mind and face,  
With saddening shame depicted for a space :  
“I grieve still more to be by thee thus found  
In the misery in the which I’m seen,  
Than when from other life myself was ta’en.  
Request to answer I cannot deny.  
Thus low my station is, because a thief  
Of ornaments from sacristy the chief,  
And falsely put it upon another.  
But such to see that thou mayest not rejoice,  
If e’er you issue from these cloudy skies,  
To my annunciation ope your ears.  
Pistoia first the Neri’s loss resents,  
Then Florence changes laws and citizens ;  
Vapour the war from Val de Magra draws  
In turbid clouds, which rolls in upper air,  
And, with impetuous tempest and severe,  
Above Piceno’s field conflicting meets,  
Where it will break in pieces on the head  
Of each Bianco to be prostrated.  
This have I said, because ’twill make thee sad.”

## CANTO XXV.

AND when his words were ended, there the thief  
Upraised his hands in mockery on high—  
“ Take them, O God ! I level them at thee.”  
Henceforth the serpent race and I were friends ;  
One, at the point, his neck entwining o’er,  
As if—“ I do not wish thee to say more.”  
Another wound itself around his arms ;  
Such rivets in the front his windings make,  
All power of movement for the time to take.  
Alas for thee, Pistoia ! stand you not  
In ashes, and no longer to endure,  
So far degenerate from thy sires of yore !  
Through all the circles of obscurest hell,  
No spirit saw I with such pride rebel  
Against his God : not he from Thebes who fell.  
He fled, and uttered not another word.  
An ireful Centaur then I saw come near,  
And crying—“ Where, where is he, the severe ? ”  
Thy marsh, Maremma, has not, I believe,  
So many adders as upon his side,  
As far as where to human face allied.  
Above his shoulders, and behind the nape,  
With opened wings a breathing dragon lay,  
Who reddened fire on any in the way.  
My master then said—“ This one is Cacus,  
Who, under the rock of Mount Aventine,  
The blood he shed might in a lake confine :

From brethren of his hue a different path  
He treads, for fraudulent vice, which makes him bide  
With that great herd now closing to his side.  
And hence cessation found his deeds oblique,  
Beneath the mace of Hercules at length,  
With hundred blows, he scarcely felt the tenth."  
And while he spoke he had traversed the way.  
Three spirits then approaching from below,  
Ere I or leader could perceive or know,  
Except when they exclaimed, "Who may you be?"  
And then the talk we were engaged in ceased,  
All our attention unto them addressed.  
I knew them not, but so it followed then,  
As any case the consequence might frame,  
That one required to use the other's name—  
Was saying then, "Where does Cianfa bide?"  
When I, to fix the attention of my guide,  
My finger from the chin to nose applied.  
And if thou, reader, to believe art slow,  
What I shall tell, 'twill be by no means strange,  
For I who saw it must suspect the change.  
My eyebrows while I raised, to view the three,  
A serpent with six feet was seen to lance  
On one he altogether grasped at once.  
With his mid-feet he griped him in the paunch,  
With his fore-feet he seized upon each arm,  
And either cheek the cruel teeth alarm ;  
His hind-feet he extended to his thighs ;  
And sent the tail betwixt them both around,  
The reins to fix on which behind it bound.  
The green ivy never was enrooted

To growing timber, as the horrid beast  
Through other's members had its own impressed.  
And then they grasped, as if of burning wax  
The other each with colours to enrich,  
And now appeared no longer which was which.  
Thus o'er the paper, from the burning heat,  
The colour gathers of encroaching brown,  
Not black, although the white has died and gone.  
The other two regarded it, and each  
Cried out—"Alas, Agnello, how you change !  
Not one, nor two, single nor double, strange !"  
The two heads now becoming only one,  
Appearing, the figures two commingled—  
In one face the two no more you singled.  
Two arms were made of what were four before :  
The thighs, the legs, the belly, and the chest,  
Became such members as could ne'er be guessed.  
All former aspect was at once destroyed.  
Two, and yet neither, perverse image was,  
And so passed on, but at a slower pace.  
Like the green lizard, in the fiercer heat  
Beneath the Dog-star, flitting from the hedge,  
Like lightning-flash across the pathway's edge ;  
Thus appeared there, darting towards the bowels  
Of the two others, serpent all on fire,  
Livid and black as a grain of pepper.  
In that same part from whence at first is ta'en  
Our nourishment, the one of them transfixed,  
Then fell before him to the ground annexed.  
The one transfixed beheld him, nothing said :  
Nay, closed his feet, and by-and-by he yawned,

Like one with fever or with sleep unmanned.  
On serpent he, on him the serpent looked :  
One from the mouth, one from incision spot,  
Sent a strong smoke ; the smokes encount'ring met.  
Let Lucan now be silent, where he treats  
Sabellus of Nasidius at large,  
And mark the arrow which I now discharge ;  
Of Cadmus, Arethusa—Ovid mute,  
That to a snake, nor that to fountain turn—  
In verse, for these shall I with envy burn ?  
Two natures never he, when front to front,  
Could change, when both the figures were so swift  
To clothe themselves reciprocal in theft.  
Together so responded to the rule,  
That serpent turned its tail into a fork,  
And wounded made his feet united work.  
The legs and thighs together with themselves  
Were so compressed, that in a little there  
Not any sign of juncture could appear.  
Quickly took tail the figure he had lost—  
Assumed the softness of a different skin,  
While that of other hardened from within.  
I saw the arms advancing through armpits,  
And both the feet of wild beast, which were curt,  
Lengthening as the other's feet grew short.  
And then the feet, contorting up behind,  
Became the member which a man conceals,  
And double gates in his the wretch reveals.  
While both were yet beneath the veil of smoke,  
Coloured afresh o'er one the skin annealed,  
Which from the other lately had been peeled.



The one rose up and then the other fell,—  
Nor turning yet the impious eyes we trace,  
Although beneath had each transformed the face.  
Erect the one drew to his temples high,  
Formed ears, of that superfluous beneath  
Issuing from the smooth cheeks as from their sheath;  
And what retreated not, retracted there,  
Of surplusage he formed a nose for face,  
And thickened lips in due proportioned space.  
The one who lay, his muzzle stretched before,  
Into its head withdrew its ears, as well,  
As ever snail its horns within its shell;  
The tongue, before united and adept  
At speech, divides in two—the forkèd one  
Of other closes up,—the smoke falls down.  
The soul which now a wild beast was become,  
Escaped, and, hissing, followed valley's reach;  
While other, sputtering, imitated speech;  
With new shoulders turned him at first around,  
And then he said—"I wish Buoso may run  
This pathway through, on breast, as I have done."  
So saw I, in the seventh expanse of sand,  
Mutation, transmutation :—my excuse  
The novelty, if hard the pen I use.  
Confused perchance were my bewildered eyes,  
And faint the power of subjugated mind,  
But yet mine eyesight never was so blind  
Not to see well Puccio Sciancato,  
The single he, with three companions ranged,  
Who came the first, and who was never changed :  
The other he for whom Gaville mourns.

## CANTO XXVI.

REJOICE thou, Florence ! since so great thou art,  
That thou can'st beat thy wings o'er sea and land,  
And through infernal space thy name expand.  
Among the band of thieves, full five I found  
Thy citizens, and me the shame still soils,  
And no great honour upon thee recoils.  
But if, when morning 's near, we dream of truth,  
Thou'lt feel henceforth before few days expire,  
What Prato's wishes, and his thoughts desire.  
And if it happened now the time were good,  
Would it were so, since so it must abide,  
I'll feel it more upon the turn of tide.  
We parted thence, and o'er the tooting stair  
My guide remounted, and upheld me there.  
Pursuing thus the solitary way,  
Among the splintered rocks of that sea-cliff  
The feet without the hands gave no relief.  
I sorrowed then, and now renew my grief,  
When I my mind direct to what I saw ;  
And more my genius curb and keep in awe  
Lest it should run where virtue cannot lead :  
If the good star, or something better yet,  
Has blest me, blessing I should not reject.  
Oft as the peasant on the hill reclines,  
When he enlightens for a longer space,  
Who all the world can brighten with his face,  
And when the fly gives place unto the gnat,

Beholds he fire-flies through the valley low,  
In which he tends the vines or holds the plough ;  
Such and so many fires resplendent shone  
Through all the eighth gulf, soon as sight grew clear,  
And all within its secret depths appear.  
Like him his wrong avenging with the bears,  
Who saw the chariot of Elijah start,  
Erect the horses heavenward depart ;  
Who with his eyes pursued so far to see  
The flame diminish, distant sky bedeck,  
Ascending upwards to a misty speck.  
And so they moved each one along the throat  
Of fosse, where none displayed the hidden theft,  
And every flame away a sinner reft.  
I stood upon the bridge to gaze beneath,  
But had I not laid hold upon a rock,  
Down I should have fallen without other shock.  
The guide, who saw me thus attentive look—  
“ In fires,” he said, “ the spirits are inhumed,  
And swathed in that with which at first illumed.”  
“ My master,” I replied, “ thy words to hear  
Assures me much, although I had inferred  
That so it was, and wished to ask a word—  
Who is in that fire that is divided thus,  
Which seems to rise above the Theban pyre,  
Where burn the ashes of unslaking ire ?”  
He answered me—“ Within that flame endure  
Ulysses, Diomed, their fate ; and both  
To vengeance hasten, as they did to wrath ;  
Within their flame have reason to deplore  
The ambush of the horse, from which proceed

The issuing Romans and their noble seed ;  
Lamenting, too, within the cruel arts,  
Deïdamia mourning for Achilles' loss ;  
Troy's lost palladiums their cares engross."  
" If come their speech from the ascending sparks.  
Master, one prayer—the cause, and  
Reason why, is equal to a thousand :  
That you will not deny my wish to wait  
Till flame that's hornèd hitherward ascend.  
Behold with what desire to it I bend."  
" Your prayer," he said, " is worthy of much praise ;  
My mind it meets with corresponding vein ;  
But now thy language for a while restrain.  
Leave me to speak. I can imagine well  
Thy wish ; and they, too, may be shy of speech,  
For they were Grecians, should your accents reach."  
And when the flame approached to where we were,  
When to my guide it seemed the time and place,  
I heard him greet them, could his accents trace :—  
" O ye who, two, are compassed with one fire !  
If, living, aught I merited from you,  
And small or great the merit you allow,  
When in the world I wrote the lofty verse,  
Move not from hence till one of you reveal  
The final death-scene and his ruined weal."  
The horn more prominent of the antique flame  
Rolled itself together, murmuring,  
As when the rising wind its form is stirring.  
The waving top, then moving to and fro  
Like moving tongue, which then was heard to speak,  
Sent forth a voice upon the ear to break :—

“ When I left Circe for a year, constrained,  
And more, and when to land of Gaeta came,  
Before Æneas had conferred the name,  
Nor sweetness of my son, nor piety  
For aged father, nor arrear of love  
To glad Penelope, my mind could move,  
Could conquer yet the ardour in my breast  
In the worldly wisdom to become expert—  
In every virtue, and in every art.  
I put myself upon the open deep,  
Alone in bark, and with a company :  
Small as it was, it ne’er deserted me,  
On either coast, until we looked on Spain,  
Morocco then, and then Sardinian ground,  
And other isles that salt wave bathes around.  
In tardy age declined, at length attained  
The ocean strait to sea which runs within,  
Where Hercules beheld his pillars’ sign,  
Beyond the bound where enterprise abates.  
Of groves of Seville on the right bereft,  
Ceuta before we passed upon the left—  
‘ O brothers ! through a hundred thousand ills,’  
I said, ‘ we’ve steered in voyage to the west ;  
One little watch remains to reach our rest.  
While senses yet somewhat of strength retain,  
Refuse not yet experiment to try  
Of lands beyond the sun and living world that lie.  
Consider, then, the birth from whence you sprung :  
You were not made, like brutes, to live and die :  
The path of virtue and of knowledge try.’  
No longer blunt, but sharper than before,

With short address I made them by the way  
So bent, I scarce had made companions stay,  
We turned our prow again at morning dawn.  
Our oars we made like wings, with which we flew ;  
Wider and wider course on larboard grew.  
Already all the stars of other pole  
The night beheld ; and ours was now so low,  
Emerging scarce above evening billow.  
Five times rekindled, and as many quenched,  
The light sublunar of the lofty moon,  
Since the deep passage first we entered on,  
And then appeared at last a mountain brown :  
At distance loftier itself upreared  
Than any former I had seen upreared.  
Our joy too soon was turned into complaint,  
For from the new-found land a whirlwind rose,  
Which struck the vessel on her landward bows.  
Three times it made her whirl with all the waves,  
And at the fourth it lifted up the poop ;  
So pleased, another made the prow to stoop,  
Until the sea rolled o'er us with its swoop."

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## CANTO XXVII.

Now was the flame's direction high and still,  
No more to speak, already on we may,  
With the sweet poet's license, hold our way.  
When, lo ! another, following, drew near,

Our eyes attracted to its top intense,  
By sounds confused which seemed to issue thence.  
As the Sicilian bull rebellowed first,  
With his complaint retributive the while,  
Who first attempted it with smoothing file,  
Repeated lowings with afflicted voice,  
As if through all the windings of its mould  
Transfixed with pain that is not to be told :  
No outlet there, nor avenue to find,  
At first the fire into that language turned,  
The words then struggling from the flame that burned.  
But after they had found an issuing way  
At highest point, which gave the gliding worth  
The tongue had given them when it sent them forth,  
We heard its speech—"O, thou ! to whom direct  
I speak, who lately said, in Lombard tongue,  
'Away with thee !' I will not tease you long.  
Though I have come it may be something late,  
Let it not vex to hear and speak in turn :  
I am not vexed, although you see I burn.  
If to this blind world thou art lately fallen,  
And if you come from that delightful land—  
From Latium, where my young deceit was fanned—  
Tell me—Romagna, has it peace or war ?  
I was from mountains 'tween Urbino's rocks  
And ridge where Tiber first his stream unlocks."  
I still looked down attentive, and inclined,  
And then my guide touches my side and says—  
"Speak thou, for this is one of Latin race."  
And I, whose answer was already framed,  
Without delay to speak to him began :



“O soul so far below, a hidden man !  
Thy Romagna is not, and never was,  
Without contention in her tyrants’ breasts ;  
But open war I left not in these parts.  
Ravenna as she was for many years :  
Polenta’s eagle there no longer springs,  
But now envelops Cervia with its wings.  
The land which made the lengthened trial once,  
And of Franceschan race the bloody heap,  
The claws of green beneath them quiet keep.  
Verrucchio’s mastiffs, both the young and old,  
Who ruled Montagna with dominion proud,  
In the accustomed place still suck her blood.  
Lamone and Santerno governs he—  
The lion azure in the argent field—  
Who changes when the changing seasons yield ;  
And she whose side the river Savio bathes  
From tyranny to liberty vibrates.  
And now, I pray thee, wilt thou not relate ?  
Be not more hard than all beside have been :  
May yet thy name erect its brow between  
The rest in world.” The flame had roared a while,  
As ’t will the point began to move once more—  
From here to there sought utterance as before.  
“If I thought that I was answering one  
Who could return unto the world again,  
Still without motion should this flame remain.  
But since from out this dungeon never one  
To earth returned, if what I’ve heard is true,  
I fear no infamy in answering you.  
A man of arms I was, then—Cordelier :



Methought the girdle would have made amends—  
And so it would, if right the mind intends ;  
But the high-priest—and evil be to him !—  
To first transgression drew my steps again :  
How, why, to that I wish you to attain.  
When of the bone and pulp my mother gave  
I still was formed, the works I left behind  
Were of the fox, not of the lion kind :  
Contrivances, and all the hidden schemes,  
I knew them well, could to their course attend,  
Until their sound reached to the world's end.  
But when I saw I had attained that age  
Of human life, when each no more should roam,  
But furl the sails and bring the meshes home,  
That which before had pleased disturbed me then.  
Repentance and confession had not swerved,  
Unhappy me ! but that, device had served.  
That he, leader of the new Pharisees,  
Who waged his wars against the Lateran,  
Not the Judæan or the Saracen,  
Every enemy he had a Christian ;  
Not one at Acre led th' avenging band,  
Nor merchant any in the Soldan's land ;  
Not his high office, nor the order's awe  
Respected, nor Saint Francis' girdle, seen  
In me, that 's wont to make the wearer lean.  
Sylvester thus did Constantine request,  
In Mount Soracte, leprosy to cure.  
My master thus, recovery to insure  
From fevered pride he could not more endure,  
My counsel asked ; and I was silent then,

For to me they seemed expressions drunken.  
He spoke again : 'Suspect not in thine heart :  
I absolve thee now ; and, to prove thy worth,  
Teach me to cast Penestrino to the earth.  
The heaven I can shut up, and then unlock,  
Thou know'st ; and two the number of the keys  
My predecessor knew not how to prize.'  
The graver arguments had touched me more,  
And silence then appeared to me the worse.  
'Since thou absolv'st me, father, from the force,'  
I said, 'of guilt, in which I needs must fall,  
Long promises, but performance short to meet,  
Will make you triumph on your lofty seat.'  
Saint Francis came for me when I was dead.  
One, 'mong dark cherubim who filled his lot,  
Said—'Take him not away, and wrong me not :  
'Tis his to sink amid my wretched ones ;  
For that deceitful counsel given of late  
To one, I watched him pulling at the bait.  
Who can absolve without repentance true ?  
To will and to repent cannot consist,  
For that the contradiction must resist.'  
Oh me ! in misery how I shrunk when he  
Seized me, and said—'Perhaps, when I was seen,  
You thought not I should prove logician keen.'  
To Minos carried me, who twined his tail  
For me eight times around obdurate back—  
Gnawed it—his rage had put him on the rack :  
'This one is of the race in wicked fire.'  
Therefore, you see, I'm lost in this expanse—  
Clad in this habit—lead this wretched dance."

His speech at last when he had thus fulfilled,  
The flame departing, sorrowful to burn,  
Writhed round, and beat, and writhed its sharper horn.  
Then passing on, my leader and myself  
Mounted, and reached where other arch confines  
And covers fosse, in which are paid the fines—  
Sin of commission upon them combines.

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## CANTO XXVIII.

WITH words at ease what mortal man could e'er,  
Of all the blood and plagues, tell to the full  
I saw, on purpose to narrate at will ?  
Our speech alone, and e'en the vassal mind,  
To reach so far, in sense must fall behind.  
Not all with which the former race had dyed,  
Land of vicissitude ! thy bloody soil,  
Where mourns Apulia 'mid her rural toil,  
With Roman hands ; and in the lengthened war  
Which brought the harvest of the signet-rings,  
As Livy tells ; nor ever error brings,  
With that which felt the shock of painful blows  
Of Guiscard Robert in the bloody brunt,  
Whose bones unburied still the land affront—  
Of Ceperan, whose treachery gained the day —  
Apulian, and that of Tagliacozzo,  
Where, unarmed, o'ercame he, bold Alardo.  
One showed a lopped-off limb, and one a maimed.

Such scene equal who could, the strange turmoil  
Which thronged the ninth gulf with its wounded coil.  
A cask without a hoop, or lost its stave,  
As I've seen one, that never gaped so wide,  
Chin and canal at outlet to divide :  
Between the legs the gathered entrails hung ;  
The whole midriff, and the sad sack was seen,  
Which turns to refuse what it swallows clean.  
While with fixed look on him intent I gazed,  
He looked at me ; his hand then opened breast,  
And said, " Mark how I lacerate my chest—  
Behold and see how Mahomet is maimed !  
In front, lo ! Ali goes, and weeping sore,  
Cleft from the chin to lock that hangs before ;  
And all the others whom you look on here,  
Of scandal and schism disseminators,  
Were living once, now are cloven traitors.  
A devil here is following, who divides  
So cruelly with sword-cut, it would seem  
Dissevering every spirit of this ream,  
When once we've made the doleful circuit round ;  
For all the wounds we had are closed, alas !  
Ere we approach before him to repass.  
But thou—who art thou, musing on the rock,  
Who hesitate, perhaps, in penal times,  
To take the lot awarded by thy crimes ?"  
" Nor death has touched him, nor does crime conduct,"  
Replied my master, " to tormented place ;  
But full experience of woe to trace.  
To me, though dead, belongs the task to lead  
Him down, a living soul, from gyre to gyre.

The thing is true which I to thee declare.”  
More than a hundred spirits, when they heard,  
Arrested stood in fosse to gaze on me—  
In wonder thus forgetting misery.  
“Tell Friar Dolcin to provide him well,  
You that, perhaps, ere long will see the sun,  
If he wish not to follow me too soon,  
In food if straitened—for the snows surround—  
That victory fall not to the Novarese,  
Which otherwise he might achieve with ease.”  
One of his feet suspended in his walk,  
In momentary pause to speak with me,  
In parting, on the earth extended he.  
Another then, and with dissevered throat,  
Mutilated nose, to the eyebrow gone,  
Who had not any but one ear alone,  
Remained still, regarding me as marvel,  
Before the others, with his windpipe cut,  
Vermilion stains on outside round about,  
And said—“O thou whose fault condemns thee not!  
Once seen before, and in Latinus’ soil,  
Unless the strong resemblance me beguile,  
Remember Pier di Medicina.  
If you review again the lovely plain  
The slopes from Vercelli to Marcabo contain,  
And Fano’s worthies, make the two aware,  
Both Master Guido and Angiolello,  
If the departed spirits future know,  
From out their vessel will the two be cast,  
Close by Cattolica, and in a sack,  
Nor treachery of cruel tyrant lack :

Between the Cyprus and Majorca isles,  
The worst of crimes upon the roaring waves,  
Beheld of pirates and Argolic braves.  
The traitor there, who sees but with one eye,  
Lord of the land that one with me desires  
Had ne'er saluted eyesight which admires,  
He'll make them come to conference with him.  
Foscara's breezes undisturbed may rave,  
Nor prayer nor vow will shield them from the grave."  
And I to him—"Demonstrate and declare,  
Unless your will the novelty delays,  
Who is he, tell me, of the bitter gaze?"  
He placed his hand on the cheek-bone of one  
Of his companions, forthwith oped his mouth,  
Cried—"This is the one, I tell to thee the truth,  
Who chased the floating doubt from Cæsar's mind ;  
Who said that preparation shuns delay,  
Which disadvantage brings to lose the day.  
The tongue extracted, cut out at the root,  
For that hard speech, from Curio's mouth came out."  
And one, who had lost the hands both right and left,  
Raised through the darkling air the severed wrists,  
That bleeding drops fell on his face like mists :  
"Rememberest aught of Mosca, he who said,  
'The deed that's done is finished too,' alas!—  
The seed of sufferance to the Tuscan race."  
I added—"And of death that spent thy line."  
Grief accumulating on grief in pace,  
Dulness and sorrow blended in his face.  
But I remained to cast my eyes on crowd,  
And saw what I should fear myself to tell,

Without more proof to show of such marvel,  
Unless my conscience could myself secure,  
With its good company, enfranchise breast,  
Beneath the armour of a heart at rest.  
I saw then—sure, methinks e'en yet I see—  
A headless bust advancing in the way,  
With other souls of that sad company ;  
The severed head sustaining by the hair,  
In guise of lantern pendent from the hand ;  
And cried, " Ah me !" regarding where we stand.  
Of self a lantern for himself he made ;  
And there were two in one and one in two,  
And he who governed it alone knows how.  
Direct when at the foot of bridge we were,  
He raised his arm on high, with all his head,  
To bring the words the nearer which he said,  
Which were—" Now see the trouble that molests,  
Thou breathing wanderer, our fate to guess ;  
Among the dead is any woe like this ?  
If thou desirest news of me to know,  
Then hear : Bertram I am of Bornion,  
Who gave the evil counsel to King John.  
Made father, son, rebel against themselves.  
Ahitophel for Absalom did less  
To plunge in strife, and David in distress.  
Two persons as I parted so conjoined,  
Thus is my brain disparted, misery !  
From the beginning to the trunk of tree :  
The fearful forfeit to be seen in me."

## CANTO XXIX.

THE numerous people, and the diverse plagues,  
Made my bewildered eyes so much to reel,  
They wept like infants o'er departed weal.  
And Virgil said to me—"Why gazest so?  
Why strain thine eyesight thus without relief,  
To view the spirits blunted by their grief?  
You did not so at all the other gulfs!  
Think'st thou to number circuit of the ground,  
That twenty-two miles run the valley round?  
The moon already is beneath our feet,  
The hours, alas! conceded are but few,  
And what you have not seen remains to view."  
"If you had marked," I then replied, and quick,  
"The reason wherefore I was gazing so,  
Perhaps you would not blame my progress slow!"  
Forward a little, then, and I behind  
The guide, the moment when I made reply,  
And added then—"Within that cave to spy,  
Where you beheld me cast a steadfast eye,  
A spirit of my blood I think there is,  
Who weeps transgression in a gulf like this."  
The master said—"Thyself disturb not now;  
Let thy reflections in advance be here:  
Of other think, let him continue there.  
I saw him, at the foot of little bridge,  
Pointing to thee, with threatening finger reared—  
Geri del Bello was the name I heard;



But then you were entirely so absorbed  
With him whom Altaporte's turrets own,  
That way of him you looked not until gone."  
"My guide," I said, "the death of violence  
He met avenged is not ; and hence the blame  
That now accrues to partners of his shame  
Made him disdainful, and he passed me thus,  
Nor stopped to parley—so at least I deem—  
And made his fate a more regretful theme."  
Thus we discoursed unto the place which first  
Upon the rock the other valley showed  
To lowest depth, had but the light allowed,  
When last, o'er arched inclosure, footsteps found  
Of Malebolge, whose cloistered inmates rue,  
The depth at last unclosing to our view,  
Diverse laments at once shot through my ears,  
Whose arrows all, with pity steeled, appear  
So keen, with hands they made me close each ear.  
If all the sick Valdichiana sees  
From July close couching to September,  
Maremma's, Sardinia's noxious ember,  
In one fosse were all combined together,  
Such was the sorrow there, and stench that rose,  
Which festered limbs continually disclose.  
Down the long rock's descending bulwark point,  
Still keeping to the left, our pathway lay  
Inclining to the depth where minister  
Of the High Lord, Justice, that cannot err,  
Condemns the forgers on the register.  
Not greater grief, I think, there could have been  
Drooping to view Ægina by the sea,

When all the air was full of malady ;  
When all animals, e'en to little worm,  
Fell down, and afterwards the ancient race,  
(If to the bards you can accord the grace)  
From seed of ants, revived on earth,  
Than we could see through valley so obscure,  
In heaps the spirits languish and endure.  
One on the belly, on the shoulder one,  
O'er other ; and one, creeping by the way,  
Himself transported through the sad journey.  
Now step by step we went, and nothing said,  
Looking and listening to diseased around,  
Who could not lift their persons from the ground.  
I saw two sufferers sit, propped up the twain,  
Like brazen vessels, mutual heat to gain.  
From head to foot the frequent splinters stain.  
I ne'er saw curry-comb so swiftly used  
By groom, expected by his haughty lord,  
Or by himself, of tedious waiting tired,  
As oft as each of them essayed the bite  
Of nails all o'er himself with fury great,  
Of the mad itching succour none to meet.  
The incrustation from the nails came down,  
As with the knife the scales come from the fish,  
The carp, king carp, or larger in the dish.  
" O thou that with the finger can'st unmail !"  
My guide began to say to one of those,  
" And pincers make of them, at times to use,  
Tell me if any Latin there be found  
Of those within : so may thy nails suffice  
Eternally to wait on this emprise."

“Latini are we both you see so spoiled,”  
Replied the one, and when he spoke he wept ;  
“But who art thou who askest so abrupt ?”  
“With him who lives,” he said, “I trace the way ;  
From precipice to precipice descend,  
To him to show where downward regions tend.”  
The bond that mutually supported fell,  
And each to me in trembling horror turned,  
With all the rest to whom the words returned.  
Good master quite addressed himself to me,  
And said,—“Now say to them e’en what you can.”  
Obedient to his wish, and I began :—  
“If your memory is not snatched away  
In the first world, but dwells in human minds  
Alive on earth, when many a sun ascends,  
Inform me who you are, and of what race,  
If your ill-bought, distasteful trouble yield ;  
Nor here refuse to have your life revealed.”  
“I was of Arezzo, and Albergo  
Of Sienna condemned me to the fire—  
Not for transgression which has brought me here.  
Yet true it is, I said to him in joke,  
‘Now I could lift myself through air from thence.’  
He who had eagerness and little sense  
Wished I should show him art : for that alone,  
For not bestowing Dædalean wings,  
His son to fiery death the culprit brings.  
But me, in the last gulf of all the ten,  
For use of alchemy, in world received,  
Has Minos placed, who must not be deceived.”  
To bard I said—“Think’st thou there ever was

A race so vain as that of Siennese ?—  
The men of France must yield the place to these !”  
The other leper, who had heard me, said—  
“In Stricca an exception you’ll allow,  
His moderate expenses you must know ;  
The clove-flower Niccolo found, and told the way  
For rich to use it, as the garden’s fruit,  
Where such carnation only can take root :  
Except the troop, among the which dispersed  
Caccia Ascian vines and forest leaves,  
Whose dazzled mind each openly perceives.  
But to inform thee now who seconds thee  
Against the Siennese, now sharpen eye,  
That so my face to thee may make reply ;  
Thou’lt see that I am Capocchio’s shade,  
Metals who falsified with alchemy :  
You remember, if I read thee rightly,  
I was in aping Nature masterly.”

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## CANTO XXX.

IN the time when Juno was tormented  
With rage at Semele, and Theban blood,  
Once and again her jealous passion showed ;  
To such insanity grew Athamas,  
That when his wife he saw, with both her sons,  
On each hand laden with her little ones,  
He cried—“Spread out the net, that I may seize

The lioness and lion whelps at pass.”  
Extended then his talons pitiless,  
Seizing one who had the name Learchus,  
Both slung him round and dashed him on a rock :  
And she with other drowned herself with shock.  
And when the fate of fortune rolled to dust  
The towers of Troy, in universal fire,  
And king and kingdom perished in her ire,  
Sad, miserable captive, Hecuba,  
When she beheld the dead Polyxena,  
And Polydore, her son, stretched by the sea,  
She barked canine, and broke into a race—  
For such distracting griefs her soul distress.  
Nor Theban furies, nor the Trojan stings,  
Were ever seen so cruelly to infix  
In beast or human limbs the goading pricks,  
As I beheld two pale and naked shades,  
Who gnashed their teeth as they were running by :  
So runs the hog excluded from the sty.  
One came at Capocchio, where the chine  
And neck are joined, and bit so deep he dragged  
The belly grating o’er the basement flagged.  
And Aretin, who trembling there remained,  
Said—“This incubus is Gianni Schicchi ;  
Rages, runs, and thus puts out his spite he.”  
“Oh,” said I to him, “if other fix not  
His teeth in thee, let not my words harass :  
Ere it departs tell me who other was.”  
And he to me—“’Tis the antique spirit  
Of wicked Myrrha, who came t’ expect  
Her father-friend, but not in love direct ;

Who changed herself and falsified appeared :  
Like him, to gain the Lady of the Herd,  
Bubos Donati counterfeited well—  
Made the dead testate, then affixed his seal.”  
And when the two enraged had passed away,  
On whom my eye I kept intently fixed,  
I turned to see the rest with good unmixed.  
I saw one made in figure like a lute,  
A trunk the tumour made of him from groin,  
Where frame of man is forked, and cannot join.  
The heavy dropsy can unmatch each limb—  
For face would answer to a body slim.  
Such disproportioned moisture comes to him,  
It makes him hold the parching lips apart,  
Like hectic sufferer from the fevered thirst—  
To chin one turned and other one reversed.  
“ Oh, ye unsuffering ! who now abide,  
I know not how, in world of suffering,”  
Said he, “ where is your compassion stirring  
For the misery of Mastro Adamo ?  
I had, alive, whate’er I could desire ;  
One drop of water now in vain require.  
The little rivulets from verdant hills  
Of Casentine, descending to Arno—  
Gently and coolly their channels follow—  
Ever before me come, and not in vain,  
Their pictured image, their delight to drink,  
Dries more than all which makes my visage shrink.  
The rigid justice, whose confines I passed,  
Occasion takes from place where I transgressed,  
To make more frequent sighs take flight from breast.

There is Romena, where in counterfeit  
The Baptist's image I had falsely stamped :  
Hence was my frame through fire to ashes damped.  
But could I now behold the sorrowing soul  
Guido, Alessandro, or their brother,  
Branda's spring less grateful sight than t' other.  
One is enclosed, if truth the raging shades  
Report, who hold their winding course around :  
But what avails to me, with muscles bound ?  
Were I of so much lightness now possessed,  
And could advance one inch in hundred years,  
In quest of him amid this shattered race.  
Eleven miles its windings to survey—  
Half mile across, if I but knew the way.  
To them I owe my place in family here ;  
Induced the florins to beat out so thin,  
Which had three carats of alloy within."  
And I to him—" Who are the wretched two  
Who smoke like hand the wintry moisture steeps,  
And lie at length where your right boundary grips ?"  
" I found them here, and since they never turned,"  
Said he, " when first I rained into this pit ;  
Nor do I think will ever compass it.  
The one who falsely Joseph did accuse,  
The other, Sinon, the false Greek at Troy—  
Sharp fever breeds the vapours that annoy."  
And one of them, who took it ill, perhaps,  
To hear his name expressed in words obscure,  
Made him a blow upon the paunch endure,  
And that resounded as it were a drum.  
Mastro Adamo struck him on the face,

With arm as hard as if on other place ;  
And said—" At least I am not yet deprived  
Of power to move 't : by some members heavy,  
I have the arm for such engagement free."  
And he replied—" When you went on your way  
To fire, you had it not so ready then ;  
Too ready with it when you came to coin."  
The dropsical—" In this you speak the truth.  
So true a witness, ready to attest,  
At Troy you were not, when you stood inquest."  
" If I spoke false, you falsified the coin,"  
Said Sinon. " I am here for single fault,  
And you for more than any demon sought."  
" Recollect, thou perjured one ! deceitful horse,"  
Replied the one, inflated like a quilt,  
" That all the world may know, acknowledge guilt !"  
" Thy thirst convicts thee, parched and cracking tongue !"  
Said Greek, " and hence th' imposthume's waters rise :  
Thy mountain belly intercepts thine eyes."  
The coiner—" Then thy mouth is ever wide  
For evil speech, with which thou'rt wont to greet.  
Though I feel thirst, with dew I am replete :  
Thou hast the burning and the aching head.  
Entreaties, invitation, sure may stop  
To bid thee lick Narcissus' mirror up."  
To listen to them I was all intent.  
My master said—" Attention now be rife !  
I very nearly am with thee at strife."  
With anger when I saw him me address,  
I turn to him—such shame myself involves,  
And in my memory still the thought revolves.



Like him who dreams he has sustained a loss,  
And e'en when dreaming wishes 'twere a dream,  
And all its substance an unreal theme ;  
So 'twas with me, without the power to speak :  
The excuse I wished to make—something forbid  
Excusing, though I never thought I did.  
“ A greater fault less shame than thine might lave,”  
My master said, “ for yours has been too much ;  
Of every sadness then remove the touch.  
Reason suggest that I am at thy side,  
If it should prove thy fortune e'er to be  
Where such there are involved in such a plea :  
To wish to hear it is a base desire.”

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## CANTO XXXI.

It was the same tongue which bit me at first,  
That one and other cheek was tinted o'er,  
That brought the medicine, vigour to restore.  
Thus I have heard Achilles' lance was wont,  
His sire's besides, at first to be the cause  
Of grief, and then of vulnerary pause.  
We turn our back on valley of dolor,  
Surmounted bank which compasseth around,  
Traversing path without a single sound.  
There it was less than day and less than night,  
So that the eye searched out its forward line ;  
But to sound of high horn my ears incline,

Such, it would have made the loud thunder hoarse.  
Pursuing, then, the way which was reverse,  
My eyes advance a distant spot to pierce.  
After the rout so full of sorrow, which  
Destroyed the power of host of Charlemagne,  
Orlando's blast was not so full of pain.  
My head I carried soon aloft to view,  
Where many lofty towers the prospect sees.  
"Master," said I to him, "what land is this?"  
And he to me—"Because you have traversed  
Too long the darkness of the path we've traced,  
Imagination finds the scene displaced.  
You will soon see, if you approach the spot,  
How much the sense deceived you from afar—  
Onward a little, then, thyself bestir."  
Then tenderly he took me by the hand ;  
To make the fact appear less strange,  
He said—"Before we reach a farther range,  
These which you see are not towers, but giants.  
And round the bank they stand, within the pit,  
Each one immersed beneath umbilic knot."  
As when the mist begins to disappear,  
And bit by bit the eye to recognise  
What vapour hides in which the landscape lies :  
Thus through the air, so thickened and obscure,  
Nearer and nearer, on approaching brink,  
The error flies, but fear begins to think.  
When as above the compassed sweep around  
Itself with turrets Montereccion crowns,  
Thus was the bank the channelled moat surrounds  
With giants turreted at half their size ;

That race so horrible, who threatenings found  
In frowning skies, or in the thunder-sound.  
Already I remarked the face of one  
The shoulders, breast, and belly, greater part,  
And both the arms, descending ribs apart.  
Sure Nature, when she left sublimer art  
To fashion animals, did then no worse  
To make of such executors of Mars ;  
If she then of the elephant and whale  
Repent not, he who marketh well her ways  
Will find a juster, a discreeter praise.  
For when a reasoning and a subtle mind  
Is joined, besides, to evil will and power,  
Who can resist ?—for all defence must cower.  
His face appeared to me so long and large,  
As San Pietro's pine, when seen at Rome ;  
And other bones in their proportion come.  
And so that, from the bank which cinctured round  
His waist below, his striking stature rose  
So far, that e'en to reach where locks unclose,  
Three men of Friedland's height had fallen short ;  
Whereas I saw length thirty palms was worth,  
From where the mantle 's buttoned to the earth.  
“ *Raphel mai amech izabi almi !* ”  
So cried, with mouth of fierce and wide acclaim,  
That was not suited for a sweeter psalm.  
Towards him my guide—“ O foolish spirit !  
Let thy horn speak, and thus thy thoughts declare,  
When rage or other passion takes the air.  
Search at the neck, and you will find the belt  
Which binds it on. O soul ! confusion-struck,

Chained to thy mighty breast as to a rock.”  
Then said to me, “His own accuser this—  
Nimrod, from whom, whose madness vain abused,  
No more one language in the world is used.  
Leave him to stand ; let us not speak in vain,  
For so to him is every language tone ;  
As to his others, that ’s to all unknown.”  
A longer tour we made, and, journeying on,  
Turned to the left, and at a crossbow’s bolt,  
Beside a fiercer and a greater halt.  
What master bound him not for me to know.  
I cannot tell, but that he was confined—  
One arm before, the right was bound behind ;  
And with a chain which him enveloped round—  
Descending from the neck, its wreaths disclosed,  
And five times round his body it enclosed.  
“His power ’gainst Jupiter he wished to try,  
Proud as he was, against the greater powers ;  
And hence,” guide said, “the punishment endures :  
Ephialtes—he who made the great essay  
With giants once the gods to terrify :  
The arm he wielded he no more can try.”  
And I to him—“My wish is, if I could,  
Unmeasured Briareus to behold ;  
With my own eyes experiment unfold.”  
Whence he replied—“Antæus you shall view  
Not far from this, who speaks, and is unbound—  
Who’ll place us where the depth of vice is found.  
He whom you wish to see is farther off—  
Is bound, and stands in such a case as this,  
Save that his countenance more ferocious is.”

Not e'en a tower, by force of earthquake rocked,  
One mighty mass of shaking stone became,  
As Ephialtes 'gan to shake his frame.  
Then more than ever struck with fear of death,  
Before the terror then my life had waned,  
But that I saw the fetters which restrained.  
Farther we advanced, and straightway came  
To where Antæus stood, five ells in height,  
Beyond the cave, without his head complete.  
"O thou ! who in successful vale, which once  
Made Scipio heir to everlasting fame,  
When Hannibal and his had lost the game,  
A thousand lions carried off for prey ;  
And hadst thou joined the shock of mountains far,  
Ranked with thy brethren, as opinions are,  
The sons of earth had triumphed in the war ;  
Place us below, and do not think us bold,  
Where deep Cocytus is shut up with cold.  
Make us not seek Tityus and Typhœus—  
This can confer what earnestly is sought ;  
Then bend, and not with lip set us at naught.  
Yet in the world can he renew thy fame—  
He lives, a lengthened life may yet expect,  
If he's not called away by grace elect."  
So said my master. Quickly Antæus  
His hand extended, and took up my guide  
With grip which Hercules had felt on side.  
Virgilius, when he felt that he was seized,  
Said—"Come hither near, that straightway I take thee :"  
Made but one burden both of him and me.  
Such Carisenda's tower, when one regards

'Neath where it leans, if chance a passing cloud  
Come o'er, to show it from the plummet bowed.  
Such seemed Antæus : in the short delay,  
I saw him stoop, the motion we obey—  
I could have wished t' have gone another way.  
Lightly he placed us at the depth below,  
Which Lucifer and Judas can devour :  
But long he stooped not, but uprose with power,  
As in a ship the mast is seen to tower.

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## CANTO XXXII.

HAD I but stanzas rugged, rude enough,  
With the sad hollow depth to harmonise,  
Which base to every other rock supplies,  
My fancy's sweets more fully I'd express.  
But since to me no fitting numbers rise,  
Not without fear I try my feeble voice ;  
For 'tis no jest to touch on that emprise—  
Describe the base of universe with awe,  
With tongue accustomed to Mamma, Babbo.  
Those ladies, then, will they assist my verse,  
Who helped Amphion to encircle Thebes,  
That words and things may be according tribes.  
O vessels ill-created above all !  
Who dwell in place we shudder at its notes,  
Cattle you'd better been, or clambering goats.  
When we were placed within the darksome pit,

Beneath the giants' feet, low level there,  
At lofty wall I gazed in upper air ;  
I heard one say—" Look how you walk—take care  
You trample not, beneath the soles of feet,  
The heads of brethren whom you cannot greet."  
Wherefore I turned, and saw before my face,  
Beneath my feet, a lake which, from the ice,  
Had less the look of water than of glass.  
The veil upon the Danube's course, though thick  
In Ostericch, with that could never vie ;  
Nor Tanaïs, beneath its freezing sky,  
Was like to this. Had Tabernich itself,  
Or Pietrapana, fallen upon its back,  
The border e'en had not been seen to crack.  
And as the frog will stand, begin to croak,  
Muzzle out water, when the peasant dreams  
Of gleanings—often as her village themes—  
Livid and low within appeared the strain  
Of saddened souls, lamenting in the ice ;  
Chattering as storks that utter forth their voice.  
Each one inclining downward held his face :  
The mouth gave token of the cold, the eyes  
Revealed the proof of heart that ever sighs.  
When I had made some short survey around,  
I turned me to my feet, and two beheld  
Whose very hair was blended and annealed.  
" Say ye, with bosom into one comprest,"  
I said, " who are you ?" Then they bent their necks ;  
Each, when he sees, to me his face erects.  
Their eyes, which were before with moisture soft,  
Bedropping were upon the lips congealed.

The tears were frozen, and between them held  
Was never beam with other cramped so fast :  
As two wild-goats against each other dash—  
Such was their anger and the fatal clash.  
And one, deprived of both his ears by cold,  
Exclaimed, although he never raised his head,  
“ Wherefore gaze on us uninterrupted ?  
Who are these two if ’tis your wish to know,  
Alberto’s parent valley, and their own,  
Is where Bisenzio’s sloping wave comes down.  
From one they issued, and Caïna seek ;  
No other shade your search will recognise,  
So fit to turn into columnar ice :  
Not he whose breast, when pierced by Arthur’s hand,  
The sunbeam pierced that broke his shadow there ;  
Nor yet Focaccia, nor the towering hair  
Of head which intercepts my proper view,  
Who once was called Sassol Mascheroni—  
If Tuscan, well may you know who was he.  
And, that you lead me not to more discourse,  
Know I am Camiccion de Pazzi—  
Carlino darker will enlighten me.”  
After saw I a thousand visages  
Made dogged by the cold : and shivering fear  
Brings yet before me the congealing there ;  
And while we were advancing to the midst,  
Where poised each weight, I trembled as unrolled  
The cooling influence of eternal cold.  
Or will, or chance, or destiny it was—  
I know not which, but, passing through the heads,  
A face my foot struck, onward as it treads.



Weeping, he cried—"Wherefore dost thou bruise me ?  
What ! more vengeance still for Mont-Aperto !—  
Tell me, then, the cause why you trouble so."  
And I—"My master, now expect me here,  
If I can issue from a doubt in which I'm placed  
Through him : and then I'll make whatever haste."  
My guide stood still, and I addressed the one  
Who still blasphemed and cursed with bitter ire.  
"Who art thou, whose reprimand is so severe ?"  
"And who art thou, Antinorean land  
That roam'st, to strike with violence others' cheeks,  
Which, hadst thou lived, patience itself outbreaks ?"  
"Living, I am valued maybe by thee,"  
Was my reply : "If fame you ask for now,  
A place with other names I can bestow."  
And he to me—"The opposite is what I wish :  
Move thyself from thence, trouble me no more.  
Ill canst thou flatter in this valley's core."  
I seized him by the hairy scalp of chine,  
And said—"Agree to name thyself, or else  
A single hair remains not of handfuls."  
And he—"Although you rob me of my hair,  
My name I will not mention—nor my crimes,  
Though you should pull my hair a thousand times."  
His hair already was within my grasp,  
More than one tuft I had already rent—  
He barked, with eyes contracted, downward bent.  
Another cried, "What's the matter, Bocca ?  
Is't not enough to chatter with thy teeth,  
But thou must bark ?—what devil cuts thy breath ?"  
"Ah ! now," I cried, "I wish not thee to speak,

Thou evil traitor ; know that, to thy shame,  
I'll bear true witness to the deeds you claim."  
"Away with thee !" he cried—"tell me what you will ;  
But silence keep not, if you issue hence,  
Of him whose tongue's so swift to make offence—  
He weeps beside this the Franceschan lion.  
'I saw,' may you say, 'him of Duera  
In the sinners cold, in time's cold æra.'  
Should you be asked who other sinner was,  
Beccaria is beside, of wily lore,  
Whose high throat the keen axe of Florence shore.  
Gianni del Soldanier—I think, 'tis he ;  
And Ganellon, and Tribaldello, who  
Unbarred Faenza to the hostile crew."  
We had departed now from where he was,  
When two I saw both in one compass iced :  
One head like cowl was o'er the other spliced.  
In such a guise as famine eats her bread,  
So fixed his teeth the other where the spine  
Sinks in the hollow 'twixt the brain and chine.  
Not otherwise the hero Tydeus gnawed  
Thy temples, Menalippus ! in disdain,  
Than this the skull and portions that remain.  
"O thou ! that dost betray such beastly hate  
Against the man you mangle as you eat,  
Tell me," I said, "the cause may make it meet ;  
That, if with reason you complain of him,  
Knowing both who you are, and what his sin,  
In world above I may the debt pay in,  
If that, I speak with, moisture can retain."

## CANTO XXIII.

HIS mouth he lifted from the fell repast—  
That sinner, wiping it upon the hair  
Of head which he had mangled in his lair :  
Then he commenced—" You wish me to renew  
The griefs so desperate that oppress my heart,  
E'en with the thought before the accents start.  
But if my words be germinating seeds  
Of fruit of infamy to traitor whom  
I gnaw, my words and tears will both have room.  
I know not who you are, nor by what means  
You came below, but Florentine appears  
To me at least your language to my ears.  
I was, you must know, Count Ugolino,  
And this the Archbishop Ruggieri.  
Now I will tell thee why so close to me :—  
That through the effect wrought by his evil thoughts  
I trusted in him, and was taken then,  
And murdered after, is within thy ken.  
But that which you cannot have understood—  
I mean the cruel death that came ere long,  
Thou'lt hear, and know if he has done me wrong.  
Of shortened grating, and within the cage  
Which takes from me a famine-titled name,  
Which other spirits yet may serve to tame,  
More moons than one had through the opening shone,  
When evil sleep, and dream that rue betides,  
First tore the curtain which the future hides.

Lord of the chase, appeared that one to me  
To hunt the wolf, and wolf's whelps, to the hill  
Makes Lucca to the Pisans invisible :  
With the lean and eager dogs Gualandi,  
Sismondi, and Lanfranchi were the breed  
Before the hunters who had ta'en the lead.  
The course seemed short to me when sire and sons  
Were tired ; I thought I saw the sharpened teeth  
Rend the sides panting in the chase of death.  
When I awoke before the morning came,  
Heard my sons weeping in their sleep, who said—  
For they were with me—' Father ! give us bread.'  
Well may you be cruel if you weep not  
To think of that announcement to my heart ;  
And if not now, when do your tear-drops start ?  
Already they had waked and hour drew on  
In which the food was wont to be brought in ;  
From his dream each one was hesitating ;  
I heard the locking of the gate beneath  
Horrible tower ; on which I turned mine eyes,  
On them, without an utterance of surprise :  
I wept not—almost turned to stone within.  
They wept, and my young Anselmo sighs out—  
' Why do you look so, father ?—what is it ?'  
Neither by tears nor answer I replied,  
All that day, nor yet the following night,  
Until another sun to world brought light.  
And as a little of the ray got in  
To prison dolorous, and I beheld  
In the four faces but my own revealed,  
Both hands I gnawed through very force of grief.

And they, who thought I did it from desire  
To eat, suddenly raised themselves higher,  
And said—‘ Father ! it would be far less pain  
If thou wouldst eat of us : you gave the coil,  
This wretched flesh, and you should take the spoil.’  
I quieted myself, to make less sad  
These ones : that and another day all mute :  
Alas, hard earth ! that opened not at root.  
When we had arrived unto the fourth day,  
Gaddo threw himself prone before my knees,  
And said—‘ Father ! can you not give us ease ? ’  
He died there ; and, just as you see me here,  
’Twas thus I saw the three fall one by one,  
Between the fifth and sixth ; and then began,  
Blind as I was, to grope my way o’er each.  
Two days I called them after they were dead,  
But then my grief to fasting bowed the head.”  
When he had said this, with eyes distorted,  
Retook the wretched skull within his teeth,  
Like dogs’ against the bones the waters seethe.  
Ah, Pisa ! shame upon thy native race,  
Of that fair land where’er its language sounds,  
Since justice sleeps within thy neighbour bounds.  
Arise, Capraia and Gorgona ! rise !  
Shut up the mouth of Arno, which thee laves,  
And every person whelm beneath its waves.  
What if Count Ugolino did betray  
Thy castles, was it worthy, for the loss,  
To stretch his children upon such a cross ?—  
Their innocence was proved by youthful age,  
In modern Thebes, Uguccion, Brigata,

And the other two in former canto  
Forward we passed, where crystallising ice  
With rough rude touch had swathed another race.  
Not on their feet inverted in the space ;  
The weeping shut the sluices of their grief ;  
No power in eyes their rain-drops to unlace,  
It turned within, the anguish to increase.  
The first tears formed a bright collected group,  
Like crystal visors round the socket walled,  
Beneath the eyebrow filling all the vault.  
It happened then, though callous from the cold,  
That every feeling from my face had fled,  
And ceased to signify to sense of head,  
I thought that I perceived a little breeze.  
Whence I—" My master, what is that which moves ?—  
All vapour not extinguished here it proves."  
When he to me, promptly—" You shall be where,  
To tell, your eye itself will have the power,  
And see the cause of atmospheric shower."  
And one, who sorrowed in the freezing crust,  
Cried out—" O souls of cruelty the most !  
For which you're standing in this utter post,  
Remove from visage this obdurate veil,  
The heart to lighten of the sorrow borne,  
A little, ere the eyes congealed that mourn."  
" If you desire that I should thee unloose,  
Tell who thou wert ; and if I rid thee not,  
Plunge me in congelation's lowest spot."  
Replied he—" I am Friar Alberigo :  
I am he of the fruit of evil sprung ;  
For fig I taste the date protracted long."

"Oh," said I to him, "art already dead?"  
"With my body," he said, "how it may fare,  
I know not, nor am I aware.  
Such profit has the soul that's Ptolomean,  
That oft-times will the spirit fall to this,  
Ere thread is cut by goddess Atropos.  
That with more ease you may obliterate  
The tears which vitrify upon my face,  
Know that, when such a soul as mine betrays,  
The body then is seized upon at once,  
Possessed by fiend who rules for after-time,  
Until it reaches to its latest clime;  
Headlong it falls into this cistern deep.  
Perhaps above may body still appear  
Of shade of him who winters in the rear.  
Thou shouldst have known him, if thou'rt late below—  
Master Branca Doria. Not many a year  
Has passed since first he was included here."  
"I believe," I said, "that you deceive me:  
Branca Doria's not dead, thou stain to man!—  
Eats, drinks, and sleeps, and puts his vesture on."  
"In fosse," said he, "where evil talons dwell—  
I mean, where boiling is tenacious pitch—  
Not yet had Michel Zanche found his niche,  
When this one left a devil in his room;  
In his body, one near him as a limb,  
Who wrought the deed of treachery with him.  
Henceforth extend thy hand to reach me here,  
Open mine eyes." And I opened them not:  
Rusticity the courtesy he sought.  
Alas for Genoese! a race diverse

From manners—all thy faults of evil birth,  
And why not scattered from the face of earth ?  
For with the worser spirit of Romagna,  
One of thy race I found, for deeds of his,  
In a Cocytus soul in deep abyss ;  
And yet in body is his life express.

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## CANTO XXXIV.

“THE banners of the Infernal King come forth  
Towards us ; therefore, look forward through the dim,”  
My master said, “if you can discern him.”  
As when the vapour of thick cloud exhales,  
Or, when our hemisphere’s involved in night,  
A windmill at a distance strikes our sight,  
Such was the edifice I seemed to see.  
That from the wind I shrank into the rear,  
Behind my guide, no other shelter near.  
Now was I, and with fear the metre tells,  
Where all the shades were covered o’er complete,  
Like rush transparent through the glassy street.  
Some lay along, and others stood upright ;  
That upon head, and that upon his soles ;  
Other, like bow, his face to feet controls.  
When so much progress forward we had made,  
That to my master seemed the time to show  
The creature of aspect beauteous ere now—  
He movèd from before me, made me stop :



“Dites behold!” said he; “and see the place,  
To arm yourself with fortitude a space.”  
How freezing then, how feeble I became,  
Ask not, thou reader! for I cannot write;  
For every language must fall short in flight.  
I neither died, nor yet remained alive!  
Think within thyself, if ingenious deft,  
How I became of strength and heat bereft.  
The Emperor of kingdom of distress  
From half the breast up issued from the ice;  
And my stature more like a giant’s is,  
Than giants even are equal to his arms.  
Henceforth, reflect how great the whole must be  
That can with such a lesser part agree.  
If he were beauteous once as ugly now,  
And ’gainst his Maker dared to lift his brow,  
From him well might we have proceeding woe.  
Oh! what great marvel in my sight appears,  
To see three faces on his single head!  
The one before, and that vermilion red;  
The other two, that were adjoined to this,  
On middle of each shoulder seemed to rest,  
And both were joined at region of the crest.  
The right appeared ’twixt yellow and the white;  
The left was such as the descending Nile could  
Display, when sinking in alluvial mud.  
Beneath each one there issued mighty wings,  
As suited well a bird so great in size:  
No sheet so vast at sea e’er met mine eyes.  
They had not plumes, but like nocturnal bat  
Their likeness was: these with so strong he flew,

That three winds from the very motion blew :  
From these entire Cocytus was congealed.  
With six eyes he wept o'er his triple chins ;  
The tears he wept, and bloody spittle, stains.  
At every mouth with teeth a sinner crushed,  
As if an engine all their sinews rent.  
So three it was his business to torment ;  
But to the one in front was grinding small,  
Compared to tearing as he did the back  
So oft, that all the skin was seen to lack.  
" The spirit low, that suffers greater pain,"  
My master said, " is Judas Iscariot,  
With head within, and both the legs without.  
Of other two, one has the head below,  
From the black jaw depending—Brutus ;  
See how he writhes himself, yet mute is !  
The other Cassius seems, so large of limb.  
Again night rises, travellers to recall ;  
'Tis parting time—for we have looked at all."  
As 'twas his wish, I twined around his neck.  
He took his time, and fitting place he spied ;  
And when the wings, late closed, departed wide,  
Caught hold, to stay him, on the hair of side.  
From pile to pile of hair descent he tries,  
Between the bristles and encrusted ice.  
When at the point we were, just where the thigh  
Turns towards the thickening of the haunch,  
My guide fatigues, and trouble scarce could stanch,  
And turned his head to where his feet had been,  
And fastened close, upon the hair to climb :  
I thought we turned into th' eternal grime.

“Mark well, that ’tis by ladder such as this,”  
He said, like one o’ermatched by toil, “’tis meet  
From evils great as these to find retreat.”  
He issued then at opening of the rock,  
And placed me on the very edge to sit,  
Then close beside me took another seat.  
My eyes I lifted, thought that I should see  
Lucifer, as when descending with each tuft;  
But when I gazed, I saw his legs aloft.  
And whether then I felt that I had toiled,  
Let those imagine too obtuse to see  
The turning point my master made with me.  
“Raise yourself on your feet,” my master said;  
“The way is long, the road is very bad;  
Through the third hour one half the sun has rid.”  
No palace threshold was beneath our feet,  
But native dungeon of unequal tread;  
For day, an inconvenient light instead.  
“Ere from the abyss I pluck my feet away,  
Master,” said I, when I found myself erect,  
“From error to withdraw some words direct.  
Where is the ice, and this inverted thus?  
How few the hours which morn to eve betrayed—  
How has the sun such swift transition made?”  
And he to me—“Imagine not yourself  
On other side the centre, which unfurled  
The hair of wicked worm who bores the world.  
There thou wast as long as I descended,  
And when I turned, you passed the central point,  
On which the weight from every side’s conjoined.  
Beneath th’ adjoining hemisphere thou art,

Opposed to that, and covered by dry land,  
Which saw expire, e'en where its skies expand,  
The Man of sinless birth, who sinless lived.  
You have your feet upon a smaller sphere,  
Whose other face makes Judah's land appear—  
Here it is morning when 'tis evening there :  
And he, whose bristling side a ladder made,  
Is fixed, as when his form we first surveyed.  
'Twas on this side he fell down from the heaven ;  
And earth, which here before was seen to swell,  
For fear of him, of ocean made a veil ;  
Visited our hemisphere, and perhaps  
Left empty space in flight, which here appears,  
And caused that prominence which there uprears.”  
There is a place, from Beelzebub remote,  
Far down where'er the hollow tomb extends,  
Which not the sight the ear alone intends,  
By murmuring stream, which by this way descends  
Through channelled rock corroded by its force,  
Which twines along, without a headlong course.  
The leader and myself through pathway hid  
Entered, returning to the world that's clear.  
Of no reposing had we any care :  
We mounted up ; he first, the second I.  
Through round and hollowed opening, saw afar  
The heaven, and all the beauteous things it bore ;  
And then we issued to review the stars.

PURGATORY



# THE VISION OF DANTE

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## Purgatory

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### CANTO I.

To run through better waters hoists the sail  
My genius' gondola, which leaves behind  
The sea it passed through, of a cruel kind ;  
And of the second kingdom I will sing,  
Where human spirit purges from its leaven,  
Becomes the worthier to ascend to heaven.  
But here let poetry extinct revive ;  
O sacred Muses ! I belong to you ;  
And thou awhile, Calliope, review—  
Pursue my song, and aid me with that sound  
Which, once it struck the wretched chatterers pied,  
All hope of pardon with its echo died.  
Sweet hue, in oriental sapphire clad,  
Had filled the aspect of the air serene  
And pure, far as the circle's first confine ;

My eyes were visited with new delight  
Soon as I issued from the deathly gale,  
Which touched my breast and eyes with sorrow's wail.  
The fair planet, which attracts the lover  
With its bright rays, made all the Orient laugh,  
And veiled the Pisces which its dewdrops quaff.  
I turned me to my right hand, fixed my mind  
Upon the other pole, and saw four stars,  
From every race but first whose prospect bars.  
The heavens rejoicing seemed with little flames.  
O North ! lament thy widowed space,  
Deprived of privilege to see their face.  
When their regard escaped mine eager eyes,  
Revolving then a space to other pole,  
From whence the Wain already vanished all,  
An old man by himself was at my side,  
Worthy of reverence to look upon,  
Like sire when greeted by his youthful son.  
His beard was long, and mixed with white gray hairs,  
Which, like his locks, descending down, unrolled,  
And fell as far's the chest in double fold.  
The rays which these four sacred lights dispense  
Had broke their lustre so upon his face,  
To look he seemed a sun which met my gaze.  
"Who are ye, against the dark river's stream,  
Escaping from eternal prison-home ?"  
He said, and moved his white and downy plume.  
"Who was your guide, and lantern brought to light  
Your path, when issuing from the night profound  
Which darkens all th' infernal valley round ?  
Are laws, then, broken which direct abyss ?



Have Heaven's high counsels undergone a change,  
That near my grottos the condemned can range?"  
My leader then gave token by the touch,  
With words and hands, and other signs like this,  
To make my eyebrow and my limbs submiss;  
Then answered him—"I come not of myself;  
A lady came from heaven, at whose request  
Has he accompanied me, and under trust.  
But since it is your will I should explain  
At full our true condition, I comply;  
Nor is it possible I should deny.  
This one has never seen the latest night,  
But, through his folly, had approached so near,  
The time to turn the least that could appear.  
Thus, as I said, I came to his relief,  
To clear his path; nor was there any way  
But that by which we've struggled into day.  
I've shown him all the lost and wicked race;  
To him those spirits now intend to show,  
Which purging sin to thy dominion bow.  
How I have brought him 'twere too long to tell:  
Descending virtue lent its aid from high,  
To guide him this to hear—to see, his eye.  
Now let it please thee welcome to accord.  
He comes in search of liberty, so dear,  
That life to some less precious will appear.  
Thou know'st that death in Utica was not  
To thee so bitter, who laidst down thy vest,  
That which at the great day will stand the best.  
Th' eternal edicts are not broke for us;  
For this one lives, and I'm not bound by Minos,

But in the circle dwell where Marcia's eyes  
With chastened gaze would still demand her mate,  
And pray thy bosom to partake her fate.  
For love of her on our petition wait ;  
Through thy seven kingdoms let us now proceed.  
I will report thy courtesy to her,  
If mention made below can grace confer."  
"So pleasing to mine eyes was Marcia," then he said,  
"As long as I was there, whate'er she wished,  
Her first petitions had compliance hushed.  
Now that beyond the evil stream she dwells,  
She cannot move me, by constraining law  
Imposed upon me since its course I saw.  
But if from heaven a lady thee direct,  
As thou hast said, no flattery is required,  
Enough for me that 'tis by her desired.  
Go, then, and gird him with a simple reed,  
And wash his face till blemish none remain,  
But cleared alike from every earthly stain ;  
For little would it suit, that eye surprised  
By any cloud, present itself before  
The first of ushers at the heavenly door.  
This islet's round, at lowest level, where  
The wave is beating with its ceaseless chime,  
Bears reeds upon the soft and oozing slime :  
No plant besides this one producing leaves,  
Or else whose induration life allows,  
But stoops beneath the water's frequent blows.  
Return not afterwards you may by this ;  
The sun will show you, which arises now,  
An easier way to climb the mountain's brow."

He vanished thus, and then I raised myself  
Without a word of speech, but wholly bent  
To guide, and kept my eyes on him intent.  
“Follow my footsteps,” he began, “my son :  
Let us turn backward, where the plain declines,  
To reach its lowest terminating lines.”  
The morning chased the gray light of the dawn,  
Which fled before it, so that I could tell,  
Afar, the murmuring of the ocean swell.  
We went along the solitary plain,  
Like one who would regain the path he crossed,  
And, till he find it, thinks each step is lost.  
When we had reached a place where th’ early dew  
Contentends with sun, and where the freshening breeze  
Is blowing past, to dry it by degrees ;  
There both his hands upon the herbage, spread,  
My master gently placed—intent, I saw,  
To sprinkle freshness on my darkened brow.  
It made me turn my tearful cheeks to him,  
And then he came that colour to renew  
Infernal shades had blotted from the view.  
When we arrived upon the desert strand,  
Whose waters never bore the bark of one  
Who sailed, returning from the voyage done,  
The girdle there he fixed at his behest ;  
And—what a marvel !—while his hands retain  
The one, will other plant spring up again,  
In form like it, and in its place remain.

## CANTO II.

THE sun had now to the horizon reached,  
Where its meridian line, at highest peep,  
Overhangs Jerusalem with circling sweep ;  
And night, which opposite her circle makes,  
From Ganges issued forth with glittering scales,  
She drops whene'er her darker reign prevails :  
The white and red on fair Aurora's cheek,  
Where I was placed, as she increased in age,  
Turned to the orange at a later stage.  
We wandered, lingering by the ocean still,  
Like people pondering on the journey's ways,  
Whose heart is moving while the body stays.  
And lo ! just as the morning was to break,  
The planet Mars reddened through thick vapour,  
Low in the west, upon the ocean floor,  
When there appeared what I'd behold again.  
A light came swiftly o'er the sea to sight,  
Its motion all beside outstripped in flight ;  
From which, when I withdrew my eye a space,  
To ask my guide my doubting to inform,  
It looked still brighter, and of greater form.  
And then, on every side appeared to me  
Something, I know not what it was, but white—  
And, by-and-by, one more came up to light.  
My master yet had uttered not a word,  
Until the white at first discovered wings :  
And when the pilot understood the things,

He cried—"Take care—make genuflexions meet ;  
The angel of God behold, and bend your hands—  
Official he to execute commands.  
All human arguments how he disdains,  
So that nor oar he seeks nor other sail,  
But wings, the distant shores to countervail.  
See how he has stretched them towards the skies !  
Governing air with his eternal wings,  
Which feel no change that mortal plumage brings."  
Clearer the bird of heaven—so bright and pure,  
For such, when near, the eye could not endure ;  
But bent me then, and he came to the beach,  
Within a vessel small and light of prow—  
Scarcely drew water from the stern to bow.  
The heavenly pilot stood upon the poop,  
Blessèd was written upon his countenance clear—  
More than a hundred spirits sitting near.  
"In Israel's exit out of Egypt,"  
Sang they altogether, and with one voice,  
With all beside the rest of psalm supplies.  
He made on all the sign of sacred cross,  
And afterwards they all leaped to the plain—  
Swift as he had come returned he again.  
The crowd remaining then, astonished, wild,  
As in new place, regarding all around,  
Like one whose first essay new objects found.  
From every part the sun shot forth the day,  
And all the arrows he delivered chase  
The Capricorn from out the heaven's mid space,  
When the new people lifted up the brow  
Towards us, and said—"If you know, then say,

Direct us how to climb the steep and hilly way.”  
Virgilius replied—“ You think, perhaps,  
We know and are conversant with this place ;  
To us, like you, it bears a stranger’s face.  
We came before—’tis but a little time—  
By other way, which was so hard and rough,  
To climb by this will be relief enough.”  
The souls, observing, soon as they perceived  
That from my breathing I was still alive,  
At wonder and astonishment arrive.  
To messenger who bears the olive branch,  
As people gather to obtain the news,  
Nor scruple trampling on each other’s shoes,  
Arrested thus those spirits stood at view,  
Forgot their hopes a moment to pursue,  
Although a fortunate and happy crew.  
Advancing, one I saw before the rest ;  
With such affection he embraced me, came,  
His kindness moved me to return the same.  
Oh, shades ! so vain to all, save to the sight !  
Around him thrice my hands I had compressed,  
Thrice they returned, and settled on my breast.  
Wonder, I think, was painted on my face,  
For the shade smiled, and then a space withdrew ;  
His footsteps then I hastened to pursue,  
He spoke with sweetness, told me I should stop.  
I knew him then, and begged that he would stay,  
To talk with me would make a short delay.  
To me he said—“ E’en as in mortal frame  
I loved thee once, when free I love the same.  
I check my steps ; but tell me why you came.”

“’Tis, my Casella, to return again  
To place from which I first my journey took.”  
“No outrage have I suffered,” he replied.  
“If he who lifts both whom and when he please,  
Hath oft denied this passage to my foes,  
According to his own just will he acts.  
’Tis three months, truly, since he gave release  
To one who wished to enter into peace.  
And then, as I had to the shoreward turned,  
Where the fresh Tiber mingles with the sea,  
I was by him received benignantly,  
At that mouth to which he ever spreads his wings;  
For there the crowds for ever him attend,  
All that to Acheron will not descend.”  
“If new law,” said I, “has not removed from thee  
The memory or use of lover’s song,  
Which soothed my wishes while the notes prolong,  
With this be pleased a little to console  
My spirit’s famine, for its person grieves  
With coming here, and naught fatigue relieves.”  
“’Tis love that holds discoursing in my mind,”  
He then continued, with a voice so sweet,  
Within my breast it echoes still complete.  
My master and myself, and all that race  
Which were with him, seemed to be so content,  
On nothing else was their attention bent.  
We all were chained attention to his notes,  
When, lo! the honoured sage was heard t’ exclaim—  
“Ye loitering spirits, wherefore do ye dream?  
What negligence, and what delay is this?  
Run to the mountain, and throw off the scales

Which blind your eyes, which godhead veils !”  
As when collecting either grain or tares,  
The pigeons will assemble to their food,  
Sedate and quiet, not in haughty mood,  
If aught appears at which they may take fright,  
Sudden they leave, and let repast alone,  
Assailed by greater care from that they’ve flown—  
So I beheld the fresh and new-come troop  
Desert the song, upon that quarter bear,  
And yet like one who goes he knows not where,  
And our departure no less hurried there.

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## CANTO III.

It happened, when the unexpected flight  
Had scattered all the band across the plain,  
The mountain reason drove me to attain.  
Companion faithful, I abode by him—  
Without his guidance how could I proceed ?  
Who on the mountain could my footsteps lead ?  
He seemed to me a while to feel remorse.  
Oh, dignity of conscience, when complete,  
How small will bitter make that once was sweet !  
But when his feet had left their hurried pace,  
Which robs each action of its modest grace,  
My mind, which was a space restrained, unbends,  
Intent embraces which before was vague ;  
My sight directed to the ground on high,



Which loftier there was swelling to the sky.  
The sun behind me was a flaming red—  
My shadow broken by the ground in front—  
On me centering rays at every point.  
Myself apart from side I found, with fear  
Of his abandoning me, and with awe  
Before myself alone obscure I saw.  
My friend of comfort—"Wherefore do you doubt?"  
Began to say, and revolution made;  
"Am not I with you?—why are you afraid?  
The evening is already where interred  
The body lies that wrapt the shade with thee:  
What Naples has Brundisium cannot see.  
If no shadow falls before me, marvel not  
More than, in the heavens, that not one ray  
Stops or embarrasses another's way:  
To suffer torments, both the cold and hot,  
Bodies alike in form has he annealed—  
The how he wishes not to us revealed.  
Foolish! who think our reason can unveil,  
Or hope to pass the infinital way  
To find three persons one Substantially:  
Remain content without the manner how.  
Could you have seen at once the whole of worth,  
Why was it meet Maria should bring forth?  
You've seen the fruitless work of vain desires—  
No rest for such as vanity inspires,  
But doubt to feed amid unquenching fires.  
I speak of Aristotle, of Plato—  
Of many others"—here he bent his brow,  
And said no more—remained disturbed enow.

We had arrived beside the mountain's foot,  
And here we found the rock so rough and steep,  
It asked the lightest limbs the way to keep ;  
Lerice and Turbia's most deserted path,  
Such as the hermit loves, would ladder be,  
Compared to that, unentangled, easy.  
“ Now who can tell to which side it inclines,”  
My master said, and closed his doubtful pace ;  
“ No wings to aid, what power to try the race ?”  
His visage while he kept inclining down,  
Investigating plan he must pursue,  
Around the stone above I held my view :  
Upon the left of it appeared a crowd  
Of spirits, who advanced to us I know,  
Though scarcely sensible they came so slow.  
“ Lift up !” I said to master, “ lift your eyes !  
Behold they come who will give us advice,  
If you can't surmount the difficulties.”  
He looked at me—with freedom he replied—  
“ Let us advance ! they come so slowly on ;  
And be thou firm in hope, beloved son.”  
And still this people were a good way off,  
Even, I say, at thousand paces' end,  
Far as good thrower with his hand could send ;  
When they drew up beside the rocky cliffs  
Of the high bank, anew their nerves to brace,  
As one who walks in doubt might stop to gaze.  
“ Ye spirits finished, and ye souls elect !”  
Said Virgil, “ by that peace which I believe  
The whole of you expecting to receive,  
Tell us in what direction mountain lies—

If it be possible to climb its side ?  
Lost time the wisest find it worst to bide.”  
As when the sheep are issuing from the fold,  
By one, by two, by three, while th’ others stand,  
Timid the eye, the mouth, to earth they bend ;  
Whatever does the first the others do :  
Gathering behind him, motionlessly,  
Simply and quietly, they know not why—  
I was moving thus : I saw advance the head  
Of troop so fortunate, in humble state—  
Meek in their countenance, modest in their gait.  
The light before me they had seen was broke  
Upon the ground, and on my left hand side,  
So that my shadow to the grotto hied.  
They stood—retreated even a little space,  
And all the others who approaching came,  
Knew not the reason, but they did the same.  
“ Without your question, I confess to you,  
This is a human body which you see,  
And thus the light of sun is broke by me.  
Marvel not at that—shun not to believe—  
Not without virtue that’s derived from heaven,  
To seek to overcome this wall is given.”  
My master thus that worthy race replied.  
“ Turn you,” said they, “ before now enter in,”  
And with the backs of hands they made a sign ;  
And one of them began—“ Whoe’er thou art,  
Advancing by this way, turn round thy face !  
Hast thou e’er seen me, think, in other place ?”  
I turned me towards him with a fixed regard :  
Fair he was, handsome, noble of aspect,

But one of eyebrows was cut through direct.  
When with humility I had declined  
Having e'er beheld him, he said—"Now, see!"  
And high upon his breast a wound showed me.  
Smiling then, he said—"I am Manfredi,  
Grandson to Costanza, empress queen;  
And I pray thee, when thou art returning,  
Go to my lovely daughter, who gave birth  
To Arragon's and to Sicilia's praise—  
Tell what is true, whate'er another says.  
After my person severed by two wounds—  
Two mortal wounds—at the last I turned me,  
Weeping, to him who pardons willingly.  
Horrible the sins I had committed.  
Goodness infinite has everlasting arms:  
For those who fly to him a refuge forms.  
Cosenza's shepherd on the chase when set,  
To hunt me down by Clement, had he then  
Read well, in God, this heavenly page to men,  
The bones of my body even yet might rest  
At the bridge-head, by Benevento's toll,  
Beneath the shelter of the heavy mole.  
Now the rain bathes them, and the wind disturbs,  
Without the kingdom, by the Verde's course,  
From whence, with quenched lights, he raised my corse.  
Their malediction cannot us destroy,  
So that we turn not to eternal love  
While hope's green leaf is flourishing above.  
'Tis true that he who contumacious dies  
To holy church, e'en were he to repent,  
For all the time he stood, and thirty-fold,

In his presumption stands, if such decree,  
Through better prayers, should not shortened be.  
See how that I through thee may joyful be,  
Revealing now what is no longer hid  
To good Costanza, and the time forbid,  
Here out of these may much advancement come."

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## CANTO IV.

WHENE'ER from aught delighting, or from pain,  
Which any quality of ours can seize,  
The mind 's collected, in herself at ease,  
No powers beside can occupy or please ;  
This is against that error, which believes  
More than one soul can light the bosom leaves.  
Therefore it is, when aught is heard or seen  
Which holds the mind upon itself intent,  
Time passes, but its current is unken't ;  
For that with which we listen is one power,  
Another that which takes the mind entire—  
The one is bound, the other free, as 'twere.  
This I found by my experience true.  
The spirit while I heard, admiring there,  
Degrees full fifty, through the circling air,  
The sun had climbed, though unperceived by me,  
When we arrived where spirits to a man  
Cried out to us—"Lo, here is your demand !"  
A larger opening oftentimes is closed

With little fork of the redundant thorn,  
By swain, to keep th' imbrowning grapes unshorn,  
Than was the path by which my guide and I  
Close after him ascended, and alone,  
When from us the departing spirits gone.  
Who treads Sanleo, or to Noli tends,  
Upwards to Bismantua's heights who springs,  
Must use his feet, but here one wanteth wings :  
I say the rapid wings and stirring plumes  
Of grand desire, behind my conduct's sway,  
Who gave me hope and light upon my way.  
The shivered rock a rugged entrance gave ;  
On every side the straitening was extreme—  
On feet and hands along the ground we climb.  
When we had reached up to the utmost ledge  
Of the high bank, which opens level plains,  
“ Master,” said I, “ what way for us remains ! ”  
And he to me—“ Ne'er let your footstep faint !  
Above the mountain after me ascend,  
Until some pathway safe its succour lend.  
The summit lofty, that it conquered sight,  
And the proud shoulder, farther upward drawn,  
Than from half quadrant to the centre ran.  
I was exhausted, and began to say,  
“ O sweet master ! turn thee and look around !  
Unless you stop, how can I keep my ground ? ”  
“ My son,” said he at last, “ you may take breath : ”  
And with his finger pointing to a path,  
Which from that side the mount surrounded hath.  
His words so spurred me on to try the way,  
I forced myself to make the progress meet,

Until the ring way was beneath my feet.  
When there we both were ready to sit down,  
Turned to the east, from whence we climbed the hill—  
A grateful prospect, and delighting still.  
My eyes at first upon the shores beneath,  
Then on the sun, my looks with wonder mixed,  
That from the left its rays on us were fixed.  
Well did the poet know that I remained  
At fault, to see the chariot of the sun  
Betwixt us and the north appear to run.  
And he to me—"If Castor and Pollux  
Were companying with that mirror now,  
Which lends his light on high as well as low,  
You then might see the reddening Zodiac lie  
Still nearer where the circling Ursa wheels,  
If his old path no declination feels.  
However that may be, admit the thought,  
And if you can imagine Sion now  
Upon one line with this on earth below,  
So that both these had one horizon round,  
In diverse hemispheres of the path of day,  
Where Phæton ran aside and lost the way ;  
You'll see to this one it must needs proceed,  
From one, to that one from the other side,  
If once your intellect is clear applied."  
"My master ! certainly I never saw  
So clear before what I can now discern,  
From which despairing genius seemed to turn,  
That the mid circle which supernal moves—  
Equator called, in every art or school,  
Ever betwixt the sun and winter's rule—

For reason thou hast said, from hence recedes  
To northward, when the Hebrews at the time  
Perceive him verging to a warmer clime.  
But, if you please, I willingly would know  
How far we have to go ; the ground ascends  
Farther than vision its assistance lends.”  
And he to me—“ The hill you climb is such,  
That ever at commencing ’tis severe :  
Advancing farther, you have less to fear.  
When so much gentler ’twill appear to thee,  
Lighter and easier will your footsteps glide,  
Like ship proceeding with the favouring tide ;  
And when arriving where the path concludes,  
Expect repose, your vigour to renew.  
No more I answer, what I say is true.”  
When he had finished what he had to say,  
A voice, whose accents in our ears remained—  
“ To sit before, perhaps you ’ll be constrained.”  
At sound of that each of the two turned round,  
And on the left we saw a massy rock.  
Towards the place we drew, found persons there  
Who stood behind the shadow of the stone,  
As negligence, at times, disposes one.  
And one of them, who seemed to me fatigued,  
Was sitting, with his hands embraced his knees,  
And held his face between them at his ease.  
“ O my sweet master ! look on that one now,  
Who shows himself one negligent to be,  
Brother and sister laziness and he.”  
He turned to us, and some attention paid,  
And raised his head a little o’er his thigh—



Said, "Who art thou that goest so valiantly?"  
I knew then who he was; and that constraint,  
My loss of breath occasioned, hindered not  
My coming nearer to his resting spot.  
When I came up he scarcely raised his head,  
And spoke thus—"Well, hast thou seen the sun  
Can his chariot from the left-side run?"  
His lazy actions, and his words cut short,  
Compelled my lips to something like a smile:  
"Belacqua, need I sorrow for the while  
For thee?—but tell me, wherefore do you sit  
So rooted there? For escort do you wait?  
Or is it only your accustomed gait?"  
And he—"O brother! what use is it to climb?  
He will not let me share the sufferings meet—  
God's usher, sitting at the upper gate.  
First must the heavens sustain my form around,  
Beyond its line, as long as term of years  
Delayed the issue of repentant tears;  
Unless the force of prayer assist my way,  
Rise from out the heart whose grace is living:  
What profits that which is not heard in heaven."  
Already had the poet climbed before,  
And said—"Haste now: see, the ascending sun  
Has touched meridian; and, descending down,  
Night's feet o'ershadow now Morocco brown."

## C A N T O V.

I HAD already parted from the shades,  
And followed after footsteps of my guide,  
When, pointing finger, one behind me cried—  
“Look now, how seems it that the ray of light  
Shines not to left of him who lower treads ;  
And see how life-like is the one who leads.”  
At sound of that my eyes were turning round,  
Saw them regard the marvel that I made.  
Through me it was not light that shone, but shade :  
“Why is your mind attracted so to this?”  
My master said ; “and wherefore do you slacken pace,  
To hear the whispers of the crowding race ?  
Come thou behind me, let the people talk ;  
Stand like a steadfast tower, whose lofty crest  
Ne’er quaked obedient to the rocking blast.  
He in whose bosom thought springs up to thought,  
Destroys himself the figures of his loom—  
The birth of one prepares the other’s tomb.”  
What could I reply, were it not “I come ?”  
I said to him, with face somewhat suffused,  
Seldom to which can pardon be refused.  
And so it was, across our onward path  
Some people came before us, who rehearse  
And sing the Miserere, verse by verse.  
When they perceived that I allowed not room  
For rays of light my body to traverse,  
They changed the song to “Oh !” both loud and hoarse ;

And two of them, in form of messengers,  
Ran up to me to ask the reason why :  
“Tell us of your condition, nor deny.”  
And my master said—“You may now return ;  
Report to those who gave commission fresh—  
The body of this man, is real flesh.  
If they remained to see what shade was near,  
As I surmised, enough the answer here,  
To do them honour to be reckoned dear.”  
The kindling meteors never cut so swift  
In early night across the sky serene,  
Nor August’s clouds across the setting sun,  
As these returned above in lesser time,  
And seemed the reappearing band to gain,  
That wheeled around, like troop without the rein.  
“This people press upon us,” said the guide ;  
“They come on purpose to make some request—  
To go on, and to listen, will be best.”  
“Spirit, who goest to enter into joy  
With those same members with the which wert born,”  
Exclaiming, they came on—“thy footsteps turn :  
Look if any of us you ever saw,  
So that some news of him you may report.  
Ah ! why go on ?—why in such haste to part ?  
All of that band were we who died by force,  
And sinners all unto our latest hour :  
Then did the light of heaven the depth explore,  
Repentance and forgiveness, as we passed  
From life, in peace, and reconciled to God :  
The wish to see him is our only load.”  
“Although the faces I regard of all,

Not one I recognise ; but can I please  
In aught to give you, well-born spirits ! ease,  
Then speak, and I will do it, by that peace  
Which, tracing footsteps of accomplished guide  
From world to world, I search for at his side.”  
And one began—“ Each one of us believes  
Thy kindness real, and without an oath,  
If power and will are corresponding both.  
Pray, then, if thou shalt e’er behold that land  
Betwixt Romagna and Anjou’s command,  
Thou wilt be courteous with thy prayers t’ entreat,  
In Fano, that they will for me adore,  
From grave offences sinner to restore.  
I was from thence ; but the profound ravines,  
Whence issued out the blood which me sustained,  
Had left my bosom ’mong Antenor’s band,  
There where I thought myself the most secure.  
’Twas he of Este made the deed be done,  
Moved by unbecoming wrath against one ;  
But had I to Mira but pursued my flight,  
When Oriaco saw my flight conclude,  
The breathing creature you might still have viewed.  
To marsh I ran, the rushes and the mire  
My steps involved : I fell ; from every vein  
My life-blood streamed, like lake let on the plain.”  
Then said another—“ Ah ! should thy desire  
To cross the lofty mountain be fulfilled,  
Let gentle pity be for mine instilled.  
I was of Montefeltro—Buonconte :  
Giovanna, or the rest, took little care,  
Therefore with these I go with saddened air.”

And I—"What chance, or hand of violence,  
Drew thee out, long from Campaldino gone,  
That there thy sepulchre no more is known?"  
"Oh!" he replied, "at foot of Casentine  
A stream traverses, Archiano named—  
In Appenine above the hermit claimed.  
Just where its name it loses, there I came  
With throat dissevered, as I fled on foot,  
And dyed the plain with blood in the pursuit.  
And there I lost the power of sight and speech;  
With Mary's name I finished; there I fell,  
My body left in lonely silence still.  
The truth I'll tell, repeat to living ears.  
God's angel took me: from th' infernal seat  
Cried out—'Why rob me of my burden meet?—  
Eternal part of him you bear with thee;  
One little tear he robbed me of the cause:  
His other part another principedom draws.'  
Within the air, you know, collects a mass  
Of humid vapour, which to water turns  
Soon as it climbs where colds compress its urns.  
That evil will, on evil still intent  
In intellect, aroused the mist and wind,  
From virtue which his nature had enshrined.  
The valley then, soon as the day was spent,  
Of Pratomagno to the lofty ridge  
With clouds he covered, with the sky as bridge:  
The pregnant air to water soon was changed.  
The rain came down, its ceaseless shower instils;  
What the earth drinks not, that the fosses fills;  
And as with greater streams it is the way,

With headlong course, that nothing can restrain,  
To join the royal river's mighty train.  
My form congealed, and lying at its mouth,  
Rough Archiano into Arno cast,  
And loosed the cross was fastened on my breast,  
Which of myself I made, o'ercome with pain ;  
Rolled me along its sides and bottom there,  
Covered me then, and swathed me in its ware."  
"Ah ! when thou shalt be to the world returned,  
Reposing from thy journey's length of way,"  
Next to second thus did third spirit say,  
"Let recollection name me. I am Pia.  
Sienna made, Maremma me unmade :  
He knows who placed the ring my finger round,  
And her unpoused he had with jewel bound."

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## CANTO VI.

WHEN from the game of dice the party rise,  
He who has lost remains alone to mourn,  
Repeats his throws in sadness—comes to learn ;  
And with the other all the people go :  
One goes before, one takes hold behind,  
And one from side recalls himself to mind.  
He stops not ; one and other understand—  
"Press not upon me !"—when he stretches hand ;  
And thus from crowd he can himself defend.  
Such was I in that spirits' thickening crowd :

To this, to that, I turned around my face,  
And, promising, was disengaged apace.  
Aretine was there, from the deadly arm  
Of Ghino of Tacco who received his death ;  
One who in the chase was swallowed up beneath.  
Frederigo Novello entreated there  
With arms stretched out; and he of Pisan tongue,  
Who put Marzucco to such trial strong.  
Count Orso, and a spirit from its frame  
By spite and envy reft—for such they name,  
And not for fault committed by the same :  
Pier dalla Broccia. Let her provide,  
While she is here, the Lady of Brabant,  
With worse she herd not, if the good she want.  
When disengaged from all, as many there,  
Those shades who prayed to others for their prayers,  
In hopes of piety advancing theirs,  
I began—" It would appear that you deny,  
My guiding light ! in some context of yours,  
That heaven's decree our supplication lowers ;  
And yet it is for this these people pray.  
The hopes they trust to, will they all be vain ?  
Or else your meaning is not very plain."  
And he to me—" My writing is both plain,  
Nor will their expectation be deceived.  
If soundly thought of, it will be believed  
That highest judgment does not stoop, because  
The flame of instantaneous love fulfils  
That which should satisfy obedient wills.  
And at the time when I affirmed this point,  
Defect by prayer was not amended thus,

Since prayer as yet from God disjointed was.  
And yet, in truth, in this conjecture high  
Lock not yourself, unless she tell you so,  
'Twixt light and intellect the truth to show :  
You may perceive I speak of Beatrice.  
Her you will see upon the highest crest  
Of mountain, smiling happy, and at rest."  
And I—" My guide, let us increase our speed ;  
From former weariness fresh strength recalls,  
And see how far the mountain's shadow falls."  
" The light accompanying we go before  
As far," he answered, " as we can to-day ;  
But in this instance you have gone astray.  
Ere that may come, you must behold again,  
Returning, whom the precipice conceals,  
So that your form no broken rays reveals.  
But, look ! do you not see a spirit stand  
Alone and lonely, and regarding us ?  
And he will tell the shortest way to cross."  
We came to him—" Spirit of Lombardy,  
How haughty and disdainful dost thou stand !  
Slow moving eyes of dignified command !"  
He did not say a single thing to us,  
Allowed us to pass on, and stood at gaze,  
Like lion on the watch, who round surveys.  
But Virgil turned to him, and begged  
That he would show the easiest way t' ascend ;  
And he replied not to his fair demand,  
But asked him of our country and our life.  
And when my dear guide answered—" Mantuan,"  
The shade, collected in itself, began



To move t'wards us from whence it stood before :  
"Mantuan ! I'm Sordello," it expressed,  
"Of thine own land,"—and each his friend embraced.  
Alas for Italy ! the slave, the inn  
Of grief ! ship without pilot in a storm !  
Lady of provinces ! of filth the form !  
This spirit noble, with alacrity,  
For the sweet sound alone of his land's tongue,  
Could hail a native, though a stranger long ;  
And now in thee not without war abide  
Thy living sons, and fight, with cruel sin,  
They whom one wall, and e'en one fosse shuts in.  
Unhappy ! search thy sea-shores all around,  
Then to thy bosom turn, if any ground  
Enjoy that rest ; but where can peace be found ?  
Justinian might rein thee in anew :  
An empty saddle all that thou canst claim ;  
Without his care, still less had been thy shame.  
Ah people ! couldst thou not obedience pay ?  
And should not Cæsar in the saddle sit,  
If well thou mark'st what Heaven for thee thought fit ?  
Look how this beast has savage grown and wild,  
Because no more corrected by the spur  
Since thou attempted first to bridle her,  
Albert of Germany ! abandon'st thou  
Th' untameable, that will not keep the ranks,  
Which ought to feel the forks within her flanks ?  
Just judgment from the stars above fall down  
Upon thy blood ! and be it new and clear,  
That thy successor may be wrought with fear.  
Why has thy father suffered, and thyself,

Hungering for other lands apart to taste,  
The garden of the empire run to waste ?  
Come, see the Montagues and Capulets !  
Monaldi, Filippeschi, void of care !  
Grief on the one side, and suspicions there.  
Come, cruel ! come and see how much oppressed !  
And by thy nobles ; couldst thou cure their wrongs,  
To Santafior safety what belongs ?  
Come and behold thy Rome ! for see, she weeps :  
Lone widow ! in the night she calls on thee—  
“ My Cæsar, have you left my company ? ”  
Come, and behold how much the people love !  
If from thy hands no pity we can claim,  
Come, hide thy blushes o’er thy lessened fame !  
If it were lawful, O thou, the Most High !  
Who upon earth wast crucified for us,  
Are thy just eyes on other lands than this ?  
Is’t preparation in the deep abyss  
Thy counsels hold, o’erruling ill with good,  
Beyond us, quite unseen by senses rude,  
That all the lands of Italy are full  
Of tyrants ?—a Marcellus seen again  
In every petty village partisan ?  
Mine own Florence ! well mayst thou content thee,  
That this digression does not touch thy name :  
Thanks to thy people, that preserve its fame.  
Many have justice at heart, hedge it in,  
Nor aimless dare the bowstring to let slip ;  
Thy people have it on the edge of lip.  
The common load how many will refuse ?  
But thine to bear will answer still in hope,

Before they're called, and cry, "Myself I stoop."  
Make thyself joyful now, as well thou mayst,  
Thou who art rich !—thou peaceful and thou wise !  
That truth I speak the open fact replies.  
Athenæ, Lacedæmon—two who made  
The ancient laws, and were so civilised—  
The art of living well but little prized  
Compared to thee, who weav'st forecast so fine,  
That thou must, long before November's past,  
Renew the thread, October's will not last !  
In thy memory, how often hast thou seen  
Laws, moneys, customs, offices arranged,  
Renewed again, and men and manners changed ?  
Remember, then, thyself, and see daylight ;  
To sick one then resemblance thou wilt own,  
Who cannot find repose upon the down,  
And with each turn is fencing with her pain.

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## CANTO VII.

POLITE and joyful greetings were there there ;  
Three times—nay, four—repeated and renewed.  
"And who are ye ?" Sordello then pursued.  
"Or ever to this mountain were removed  
The souls thought worthy to ascend to heaven,  
My bones had rest, and by Octavius given.  
I am Virgilius, and for no fault  
Have I lost heaven, but for want of faith,"

Replying at the moment, thus he saith.  
Like one who something on a sudden sees,  
At which he marvels, which is scarce believed,  
Who says—"It is—no, 'tis not, I'm deceived ;"  
Such this appeared ; his eyebrow then inclined,  
Returning humbly to him, to embrace  
Of vassal or inferior the place :—  
"Glory of Latium !—for our father tongue  
Has shown by thee what is its innate power—  
Eternal value of my native bower !  
What merit or what grace have I to see  
Thee, or to hear the accents of thy tongue ?  
Art from th' Inferno, or what cloister come ?"  
"Through all the circles of the realm of woe,  
From thence," replied he, "hither have I come :  
Virtue divine me moved to come with him.  
Not what I did, for that which was undone,  
I lost to see the light of lofty Sun,  
Because too long he was by me unknown.  
Low down, there is a place not vexed with pains,  
But only dark, where no complaints arise  
Nor groans ; the air is full of frequent sighs :  
There with the little innocents I stand—  
The teeth of early and untimely death  
Bit them, ere blighted by their human breath.  
With the three sacred virtues though unclad,  
No other vice their infant minds allow :  
They know the rest, and follow what they know.  
But if you know, or can some index give,  
To show where progress easiest attains  
To where Purgatory direct begins."

Replied he—"There is no fixed certain place ;  
Lawful for me to go : above, around,  
Far as I can, and where a guide is found.  
But see, how now the sun 's declining down—  
Impossible by night to find the way ;  
'Tis well to think of where we best may stay.  
Spirits there are on right, from this remote ;  
If you consent, then I will lead to them—  
Nor yet delightless will th' acquaintance seem."  
"How is this ?" he said ; "if one would climb  
By night, can aught his course impede ?  
Or is it only he can not proceed ?"  
And good Sordello drew his finger o'er  
The earth : "You see it is this line alone ;  
You must not cross it if the sun 's gone down.  
'Tis not that any adverse power impedes ;  
Nocturnal darkness but forbids to trust :  
It is the cannot stops thee, not the must.  
Well might you wander till you fell beneath,  
Passed by the precipice, or down the sides,  
As long as yon horizon daylight hides."  
My lord then, as if in wondering, looked :  
"Will you, then, lead us by the path you said ?  
Delay may prove to us delight instead."  
The way a little lengthened from the place,  
When we perceived a hollow in the hill,  
Just what a valley on the earth might fill.  
"There," said the shade—"that is the way we go ;  
Where the side yields to give the bosom room,  
And there, expecting, wait the day to come."  
Half rough, half smooth, a winding path conducts

To edge of side, precipitous enough,  
With half the intervening space cut off.  
Gold and silver fine, the cereal grains,  
The lucid Indian wood was seen to blush,  
And the green emerald with its fracture fresh ;  
The herbs and flowerets which its bosom graced  
All other colours conquer and surpass,  
As the greater conquers what is less.  
Not nature only, in her coloured robes,  
The sweetness of a thousand odours cast  
Around a strange and indistinct repast.  
*Salve regina !* on the grass and flowers,  
I heard the numerous spirits sing between,  
Beyond the valley who could not be seen.  
“ Ere the retreating sun shall seek his bed,”  
The Mantuan began, and turned him round,  
“ Shall I conduct you to their resting-ground.  
This eminence will let you best descry  
The countenances, gestures, of all these,  
Than in the valley seated at your ease.  
He who sits more high, with face and look  
Of one neglecting what he ought to do—  
His mouth he moves not to their songs below,  
Is Rodolph Emperor, who might have healed  
The plagues that Italy to death have crushed ;  
At last by others, but too late, refreshed.  
The other, whose expression comforts him,  
Governs the land where Moldaw’s waters rise ;  
Moldaw the Elbe, the Elbe the sea supplies :  
Ottachero his name, in swathing clothes,  
Vinceslaus, his son, who overpast,

Bearded in luxury and leisure cast.  
And that with short flat nose, in counsel held  
With him who has the aspect so benign,  
Dies flying, and the lily's flowers disjoin.  
Behold him there, see how he beats his breast ;  
And see the other how he rests his cheek  
Upon his palm, sighing as heart would break :  
Father, father-in-law of bane of France—  
They know his life, so vicious, so debased,  
And hence their grief—the sharp and bitter taste.  
He who looks hardy, who accords in song  
With him whose nose is high and masculine,  
With every virtue girdled round his rein,  
Had there succeeded after him, as king,  
The youth behind, successive virtue known,  
From vessel then to vessel had been drawn,  
Which cannot of the other heirs be said.  
Giacopo, Frederigo, the realms possess,  
Neither can say the other is the less.  
Rarely shoots merit up into the boughs,  
Or human worth ; and such the will of Him,  
That from the Donor they should seem to come.  
To the short flat nose, (no less than Piero,  
Who joins his song,) these words of mine apply,  
Who move now Pulia's and Provenza's sigh.  
So much less plant is than the parent seed,  
The less that Beatrice and Margaret,  
The more Costanza boasts her husband yet.  
Behold the king of simple life alone—  
Harry of England ! This one's issue grows  
To better promise in his upward boughs.

He lower than the rest, and near the ground,  
And looking down, 's Marquis Guglielmo ;  
Alexandria, and the war and woe,  
Makes Monferrato, Cavanese, weep."

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## CANTO VIII.

It was the hour when voyager returns  
In thought, his heart returning tender too,  
To pleasant friends, the day he bade adieu,  
When the new traveller is struck with love,  
If he should hear the sound, though far away,  
Which seems as if it wept the dying day :  
When I began to find my hearing vain,  
Intent to look at one who rising stands,  
And seems to ask an audience with his hands.  
Joining, when elevating both his palms,  
As if he said, with eyes fixed on the east,  
To God in heaven, " I care not for the rest !"  
" Thee before the twilight 's fled !" the hymn devout  
Came from his mouth, with such delightful notes,  
It made me almost issue from my wits.  
And after, still more sweetly and devout,  
The others followed through the hymn entire,  
With eyes upon supernal wheels of fire.  
Sharpen thine eyes, O reader ! to the truth :  
The veil, at present, is so slight and thin,  
That surely you may penetrate within.  
I saw that gentle army then decline,



Look down upon themselves, in silence wait,  
Pallid and humble, in expecting state ;  
And saw, issuing high, and cleave the skies,  
Two angels, with two swords reddened with fire,  
With points broke off and blunted in their ire.  
Green as the little leaves of latest birth  
They were in their attire, and green their wings,  
The floating vesture their percussion brings.  
The one stood over us a little while,  
The other stood upon th' opposing bank,  
Between them they contained that army's rank.  
The head, as I could well discern, was white,  
But in the face the eye was almost lost,  
Virtue confounded in its too much cost.  
"Both came from the bosom of Maria,"  
Said Sordello, "the valley to protect  
Against the serpent on his way direct."  
And I, who knew not which the way he meant,  
I turned myself around, and shrank with fear,  
Congealing to the faithful shoulders near.  
And Sordello said—"Let us now descend  
Among the great shades to accost the same,  
'Twill be a gracious sight to look on them."  
I do believe I made three steps alone  
Of the descent, and saw one notice take,  
As if he meant acquaintanceship to make.  
It was the hour when first the air grows dark,  
Though not so much so but that it revealed  
To me the secret it at first concealed.  
He turned towards me, towards him I turned,  
Nino ! mild judge ! what pleasure I have had

When I beheld you not among the bad.  
Of salutation good, no want there was.  
Asked me—"How far and which way I had come  
To mountain foot, gave the long waters room?"  
"Oh!" said I, "'twas by sad delightless grounds  
I came this morning. Life's first stage I share,  
And owe to him advancing, meikle care."  
As soon as my reply was heard around,  
Sordello and the one behind drew back,  
Like people with some swift amazement struck.  
One turned to Virgil, other turned to him  
Who sat, and cried—"O Conrad! turn thy face  
To see what God has willed out of his grace!"  
Then turned to me—"By that unheard degree,  
Thou owest to Him, according to whose mind,  
To fathom purpose we no shallow find,  
When thou shalt be beyond the mighty waves,  
Tell my Giovanna, that for me she cry,  
'Tis where the innocent will gain reply.  
Her mother loves me, I believe, no more,  
Has changed the bands of white which bound her brow,  
Sadly she 'll wish what she abandons now.  
And light the task by her to comprehend  
How long the fire of love in woman dwells,  
Unless to sight or touch her bosom swells.  
So fair a sepulture is not for her,  
His who banded Milanese, the vipers,  
As if Gallura's cock had decked her hearse."  
Thus spoke he. There was stamped upon his brow  
That zeal direct, which, like a token, tells  
The measured fire that in the bosom dwells.

My greedy eyes ascend now to the heaven,  
Where roll the stars more slow, a motion feel,  
Like nearest part to axle of the wheel.  
My guide—"My son ! why look you to the sky ?"  
"To look at these three torches I desire,  
With which the pole on every side 's on fire."  
And he—"The four clear stars you saw at morn  
Are now upon a lower level there,  
And these are now ascended where they were."  
As he was speaking, Sordello drew him,  
And said—"See, there our adversary is !"  
Directing finger pointed where he was,  
At that part on the which no ramparts rise  
To fend the little vale—such serpent gave,  
Perhaps, the apple's bitter fruit to Eve.  
Between the grass and flowers it winding glides,  
And turns and turns its head upon its back,  
Just as to smooth the fur a beast will lick.  
I could not see, and therefore cannot tell,  
The motion made by eagles celestial,  
But that one and other moved I saw well.  
Perceived the rushing of their verdant wings,  
The serpent flew, the angels turned anew,  
And to their posts with equal speed reflew.  
The shade, who, when he called, to judge drew near,  
Through all the assault, the moment of surprise,  
Withdrew not from me, for an instant, eyes :  
"Oh may the lantern which conducts thee high  
Find in thy will but as much hardening wax  
As to th' enamelled top thy strength to tax !"  
Began the shade. "If any tidings true

Of Valdimagra, or the neighbouring air,  
You know, tell one who once was mighty there.  
Conrado Malaspina I was called ;  
Not ancient one, though him from I descend.  
Here love I bore my people is refined.”  
“ Along your country’s bounds I never was.  
But where, in Europe’s bounds, that race alone,”  
I said, “ to whom your country is not known ?  
The fame that gives its honour to your house,  
With herald voice declares the nobles’ worth ;  
So that they know who have not seen your earth.  
And I swear to thee, as I mount above,  
Your honoured people do not fritter down  
The value of their sword, and riches crown.  
Experience, nature, privilege her :  
While a bad head can turn the world aside,  
She goes direct, and evil way’s decried.”  
And he—“ Now go : the sun shall not recouch  
Him seven times ’neath Aries’ fourfold feet,  
Which forklike cover o’er his yearly seat,  
Until opinion courteous shall become  
Nailed up into the middle of thy head,  
For others’ speech a stronger nail instead,  
If judgment in its course be not delayed.”

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## CANTO IX.

ALREADY old Tithonus’ concubine,  
Whitening the edge of Orient precipice,

Had left the arms of her sweet friend's embrace.  
Her forehead, glittering with resplendent gems,  
Was in the sign of that cold animal  
Which strikes at people with its knotted tail.  
Two spaces of ascending path the night  
Had passed beyond in station where we were,  
And now the third was folding wing in air ;  
When I, who that of Adam had in me,  
Conquered by sleep, upon the green inclined,  
Where all the five were seated, not reclined.  
At time the swallow, ere the early dawn,  
Begins the saddened cry, while memory dwells,  
Perchance, on outrage which no tongue reveals,  
And when the mind is farther from the flesh,  
And less entangled in the thoughts that twine,  
'Tis then its vision is almost divine.  
In sleep I saw, suspended as I thought  
In heaven, an eagle, with its feathers gold,  
It seemed like to descending wings unfold ;  
And to myself it seemed that I was where  
Once Ganymede abandoned all his own,  
When he was rapt to consistorial throne.  
Within myself I thought—" 'Tis here he strikes,  
Perhaps from use, his prey, and elsewhere not—  
Disdains to stoop upon another spot."  
A little wheeling then, it seemed to me,  
Terrible and like lightning down it came,  
And snatched me upwards, even to the flame ;  
And then both he and I appeared to burn,  
Imaginary fire, like furnace keen :  
My sleep was broken by the pictured scene.

Thus might Achilles sense locked up recall,  
Turn his awakened eyes around to see,  
Not knowing where nor what the place might be,  
To Scyros when 's mother fled from Chiron,  
A fugitive, him sleeping in her arms ;  
By Greeks whence after reft by war and arms.  
'Twas thus I shook, when from my face the sleep  
Had fled, and I was spiritless and pale,  
As one from fear and terror will congeal.  
My only comfort still was at my side.  
The sun had gained two hours—on high he burned ;  
And to the ocean then my look was turned.  
“ Fear not,” my lord and master said to me,  
“ But be assured we've reached a lucky point :  
Relax not now, but strengthen every joint.  
At last to Purgatory you are come :  
Behold the cliff that closes it around,  
And entrance where you see the severed ground.  
At early dawning which precedes the day,  
And when thy soul lay sleeping in its grot,  
Upon the flowers down in yon valley's spot,  
Lady came, and said—‘ I am Lucia :  
This one who slumbers let me take away,  
T' insure his progress, not prolong his stay.’  
Sordello stayed, and other noble forms.  
She took thee away as the day grew clear ;  
She reached the height, I followed in the rear ;  
She placed thee here ; and, when her graceful eyes  
Had shown the open entrance, bid me look :  
Then she and sleep at once thy side forsook.”  
I was like man in doubt, who 's reassured,

To comfort turns his past suspense and pain,  
When once to him the truth is rendered plain.  
I changed my tune ; and as my guide beheld  
Me unembarrassed, he set out to climb :  
Directly up the height I followed him.  
You may perceive, my reader, I exalt  
The theme I treat of, which requires more skill,  
No wonder if I reconstruct it well.  
We were approaching, now had reached, the place  
Where first a breach appeared in workman's art,  
And open masonry the wall to part.  
I saw a gateway, and three steps beneath,  
T' arrive at it, a differing hue displayed—  
And porter, who as yet no motion made.  
And as my eyes still more and more unclosed,  
I saw one sit on highest step of stair,  
Such in the countenance that I could not bear.  
A naked sword was in his hand, whose rays  
Upon us both such bright reflection cast,  
Each glance I threw was vainer than the last.  
“Tell me from thence,” he said, “what is your will?”  
And then began to say—“Where is your guide?  
Take care that no annoyance you betide.”  
“A heavenly lady, in these things complete,”  
My master said to him, “told us before,  
And said—‘Go forward ; lo ! there is the door.’”  
“And well may she advance your footsteps’ way,”  
The courteous porter uttered with his lips :  
“Come nearer, then, and come before our steps.”  
And there we came. The first step of the three  
White marble was, and polished smooth and terse,



To look in like the mirror's bright reverse.  
A rough rude block, that must have felt the fire,  
The second was, purple approaching black ;  
Along its length, across it, showed a crack.  
The third, whose massy form arose above,  
Of porphyry rock, and of dark flaming red,  
As blood when spouting from the vein is spread.  
His feet he planted, and he kept on this,  
God's angel on the threshold sitting down ;  
So bright, it looked as of the diamond stone.  
O'er the three steps' ascent with great good will  
My leader drew me. "Bend now, and entreat,"  
He said, "free passage, to unbar the gate."  
I threw myself before his sacred feet,  
His mercy moved to ope at my request ;  
But first had fallen three times upon my breast.  
Seven times the letter P on brow he traced  
With point of sword : "Wash all the wounds and stain  
I've made upon you, when admitted in."  
Dry earth or ashes may suffice to show  
The colour of the vesture he had on,  
From under which, two keys he had were drawn ;  
Of gold the one was, and one of silver.  
First with the white he tried, with yellow then,  
To open gate to satisfy my ken.  
"When one of these refuses to obey,"  
He said, "and will not turn within the lock,  
At that passage then 'tis in vain to knock.  
One is more precious, t'other asks much skill,  
And art and genius, ere to open got ;  
For it is that which disentangles knot.



I hold them from Peter ; and he bid me err  
Rather in opening than in keeping close,  
If at my feet man due submission shows.”  
He pushed the gate that leads to sacred place,  
“Enter ; take care, and mind your onward route,  
For he who looks behind returns without.”  
Distorted hinges soon resume their place ;  
The palace bolts within their chambers rung,  
Made of some sounding metal, which was strong :  
So harshly grated not Tarpeian gate,  
When good Metellus from his post was ta'en,  
And treasure-house was empty left and lean.  
I turned attention to first thunder-sound :  
“We praise thee, O God !” they appeared to sing.  
Sweet sound of music with the vocal song.  
It brought the image to my memory near  
Of what I've heard amid the tuneful choir :  
The swelling organ harmony affords—  
Now I hear, and now I cannot catch the words.

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## CANTO X.

WHEN once within the threshold of the gate,  
Where spirits cold attachment will not wait,  
Because it takes the crooked for the straight,  
I heard it sounding, and I knew 'twas closed.  
Had but my eyes once turned, and looked around,  
For such a fault could an excuse be found ?  
We mounted upward by indented rock,

Which ran alternately from side to side,  
Just as the waves roll forward and recede.  
“Here ’twill be well to use a little art,”  
My leader said, “that we may tutor feet  
From this to that, to use digression meet.”  
Which made our steps so chary and so nice,  
That the diminished moon was seen to touch  
The bed she rose from, and again recouch,  
Ere we had issued from that needle’s eye.  
When free and open from the crag-way pass,  
Retired the mountain an united mass,  
Myself o’er-laboured, and uncertain both  
As to the way, we rested on a plain ;  
Less lonely will the desert paths remain.  
From where the o’erhanging margin bounds the waste,  
To base of lofty bank, which still ascends,  
The measure thrice a human body ends.  
Far as my eye could use its soaring wings,  
Now from the left side, now the right sent out,  
This cornice seemed of equal width about.  
Our footsteps scarcely o’er its surface passed  
When I discovered that this bank around,  
Denying access to its higher ground,  
Of candid marble was adorned so fine,  
And graved, that surely Polycletus not,  
But nature’s self, the marble must have cut.  
The angel who came to earth with that decree,  
And peace to tearful eyes, at length undid,  
Who opened heaven that was so long forbid,  
Before us seemed so really to stand,  
And sculptured was in attitude so sweet,

The image looked almost to speech complete.  
You would have sworn you listened to the "Hail!"  
For she was imaged there, and traced above,  
Who turned the key to open heavenly love;  
In act she seemed, as if she spoke the word,  
"Behold the handmaid of the Lord!" in tracks,  
Like figure properly impressed in wax.  
"Fix not your mind so long upon one place,"  
My sweet master said, who had me at 's side,  
Where heart of man is to the part allied.  
Wherefore I moved my visage, and I saw  
Behind Maria, and upon the side  
Where he was standing who the movement tried,  
Another history on the rock impressed,  
Which made me cross Virgilius and draw near,  
Thus to dispose it to my eyes more clear.  
On the same marble, then, I saw was cut  
The cart and oxen, drawing sacred ark,  
Unauthorised must tremble as they mark.  
In front appeared a numerous band, and all  
In seven choirs: two conflicting senses please,  
And made the one say "no," and other "yes."  
And similarly, too, the incense smoke,  
Which there was imaged, in the eye and nose,  
At "no" and "yes" an utter variance shows.  
The blessed vessel's way preceding there,  
The humble psalmist dancing, leaping came,  
And more and less than king the act became;  
And, figured opposite, at window saw  
Of a great palace, Michol looking out,  
Like a disdainful lady, sad in doubt.

I moved my feet from out the place I kept  
Near where another story met my sight,  
Where, behind Michol, 'twas portrayed in white ;  
For there was storied there the glory high  
Of Roman prince, whose value all must own,  
Whose rescue must victorious Gregory crown.  
I speak of Roman Emperor Trajan.  
A widow standing at his bridle-rein,  
In tears was represented, and in pain.  
Around them crowd, and troops of cavaliers,  
And eagles in the wind, flutt'ring in gold,  
That e'en the very motion could be told.  
Miserable, 'mong them all, to ask redress.  
" My lord ! shall I in vain for vengeance look !  
My son is dead, and I am sorrow-struck !"  
And he, to answer her—" Expect a while  
Till I return." And then that one—" My lord,"  
Like one whose sorrow stay could not afford,  
" If you should not return ? " " Who sits where I  
Will do it for thee." " What is other's good  
To thee, unless thine own good act 's pursued ?"  
And he—" Now comfort thee ; it will be well  
To do my duty ere I move from hence :  
So justice wills, and pity me restrains."  
He who henceforward nothing new surveys  
Produced this visible and silent speech,  
Novel to us, which here they do not teach.  
While I delighted me to look on these  
Images of humility so great,  
And for their artist dear a greater treat,  
" Lo ! on this side, but slow the way they make,"

The poet whispered ; “ of all, none that trips,  
These will conduct us to the higher steps.”  
My eyes, which to behold were all intent,  
New sights, which novelty could still enhance,  
Were not the slower to reflect his glance.  
I would not, reader ! you should e’er lose heart  
For purpose good, although that you should hear  
How God wills we should pay transgressions here.  
Of form of suffering you need not take thought,  
But of successive course to deeper woe ;  
Past the great judgment it can never go.  
I began : “ Master, that which I behold  
Move towards us are not real persons,  
Or mine eyes have erred in their excursions.”  
“ The grave condition of their torment so  
Binds them to earth, as if to find their niche,  
My eyes have not discovered which is which ;  
But look with fixed regard and thou’lt unloose  
With sight that which comes on under these stones.  
Already you may see how each one groans.”  
O haughty Christians ! miserable, alas !  
From mental sight to weakness that ’s allied,  
Confiding in perverseness and in pride,  
Perceive ye not we are but merely worms,  
Born embryo of angelic butterfly,  
Which, unrestrained, to justice flies on high,  
Where is the object of your soaring flight ?  
Insect, in whom defect alone prevails,  
And worm, in which the true formation fails.  
As, to support or floor or roof, they use  
A figure crouching, where the pressures rest,

The bent knees thus I saw approach the breast,  
Which at a semblance moves a real grief  
In him who sees it : such appearance made  
They when their forms distinctly I surveyed,  
'Tis true that more or less contracted they,  
As more or less they had upon their back ;  
And he who had most patience in the act  
Appeared to weep and say—" No more I can !"

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## CANTO XI.

" OUR Father which art in heaven ! not confined,  
For thy o'erflowing love, abundant there,  
Thy first creation must delighted share ;  
Hallowed be thy name, thy worth proclaimed  
By every creature. Surely it is right  
To render thanks to Spirit high in light.  
Thy kingdom's peace come to us now,  
For we cannot approach its threshold bright  
If it come not, with all our native might.  
As their own wills angels sacrifice to thee,  
And sing hosannas as they lay it down,  
So let men do, thy creatures, with their own.  
Give us this day our daily bread ; for then  
This desert through, when all the journey 's made,  
Each step will not be found to retrograde.  
As we forgive to each the evil done,  
Forgive us now, for thy forgiveness pours  
Into our cup for no desert of ours.

Our virtue, found so slender in the proof,  
Try not 'gainst enemy, but take our parts ;  
Free us from him, and quench his fiery darts.  
The last prayer is, our soul's beloved Lord !  
Not for ourselves, necessity removed,  
But those we leave behind us who are loved."  
Thus for them, for us, the wandering shades  
Prayed for good speed, by heavy burden pressed,  
As one who feels the nightmare on his chest.  
Not equal anguish pressed upon them all,  
Round the first cornice as they slowly crept, not whirled,  
Thus purging off the darkness of the world.  
If then for us good orisons are paid,  
What can be said or done for them by those  
In whom the root of good affection grows ?  
Well might we aid to wash the stains away  
Till every soul new purity reveals,  
And buoyant issues to the starry wheels.  
And—" Ah ! should justice, piety, unload  
You soon, so may you come to stretch your wings,  
Which answer each desire that fancy brings.  
Direct us on what hand to climb the way—  
The shortest way, if more than one attend :  
Tell us which is easiest to ascend ;  
For he who comes with me bears still the load  
Of Adam's flesh with which he first was clothed ;  
And though he wished to climb, his nature loathed."  
The words of answer which returned I hear,  
To those which he had said, I followed there.  
From whom they came was not distinctly clear,  
But said it was, " To the right hand, by the bank,

Come with us, and you'll find a passage on't  
For living person possible to mount.  
Were I not burdened by the hard rock's weight,  
My haughty neck intended to subdue,  
Whence this low countenance I carry through ;  
This one, who's still alive, and name unknown,  
I would regard to try were I at large,  
To move his pity for this sad surcharge.  
Latin I was, and of high Tuscan race,  
Guglielmo Aldobrandeschi my sire ;  
I know not if it ever reached your ear.  
My race's ancient blood and gracious deeds  
Made me so arrogant, within my lot  
Our common mother I regarded not ;  
Each man I held in such exceeding scorn ;  
The cause of death the Siennese know well—  
Each child in Campagnatico can tell.  
I am Umberto ; not myself alone,  
But all my kindred ruined ; haughty pride  
Has drawn with her misfortune to abide ;  
And here am I, subjected to this weight  
Until the will of God 's accomplished,  
Since not in life, at least among the dead.”  
Listening to tale, and bending down my face,  
When one of them, 'twas not the one who spoke,  
Twisted him under weight to ease the yoke,  
And seeing me, knew me, and cried out,  
Keeping his eyes with difficulty bent  
On me, who all inclined with party went.  
“ Oh !” said I, “ art thou not Oderigi—  
Honour of Agobbio, honour of arts—



Illuminate the Paris name imparts?"  
"Brother," said he, "the leaves more grateful smile  
Which pencils Franco Bolognese's art;  
The honour his alone, or mine in part.  
I know full well I was not courteous thus  
While still alive, and prompted by desire  
Of excellence, which set my heart on fire.  
'Tis here the penalty of pride awaits,  
And even here I should not be abroad,  
Had I not, with power to sin, returned to God.  
Oh, the vain-glory of the human powers!  
How little lasts the green and topmost shoot,  
Unless the lower growth can trace it out.  
Cimabue thought to hold the field alone;  
In painting Giotto now has all the cry—  
The fame of him obscured as it would die.  
Thus has one Guido robbed the other's name  
Of glory of the tongue,—one born at last  
May chase the one and other from their nest.  
The mundane rumour is a fleeting breath  
Of wind, that veers and varies in account,  
And changes name because it changes point.  
More fame shalt thou enjoy, if once old age  
Wear flesh away, than if thou hadst expired  
Ere left the breast, or coral last admired?  
A thousand years' eternity to thee  
Far shorter than the eyebrow's movement fleet  
To slowest orbit stars of heaven complete.  
That one who takes so little of the road  
In front of thee, sounded o'er Tuscany,  
And now in Sienna whisperingly :

'Twas there he lorded, when destroyer past  
On rage of Florence, on her pride the blow—  
As haughty then as she is filthy now.  
Renown of yours the fleeting hue of grass,  
And he discolours, and at once it fades,  
Who summoned first from earth the tender blades.”  
And I—“ The truth you speak instils in heart  
Good humility, levels all its swell ;  
But who is he of whom even now you tell ?”  
“ This one,” said he, “ Provenzan Salvani.  
And here he is, whose bold presumptuous hand  
Would bring Sienna under his command,—  
Hath gone, and thus he goes, without repose.  
Since such the payment, and the money such,  
To satisfy the man who dared too much.”  
And I to him—“ If spirit, which delays  
To turn till edge where life no more extends,  
Below remains, and hither not ascends,  
(Unless good orisons should aid its way,)  
Ere limit of the time on earth it lives,  
How was it granted here that he arrives ?”  
“ In his most glorious and palmy state,  
Frankly and freely, on Sienna’s plain,  
No thought of shame, he ventured to remain ;  
And that to save his friend from ling’ring pain,  
In Charles’s prison misery to maintain,  
And brought at last to tremble in each vein.  
No more I say, obscure is what I speak ;  
Thy neighbours soon attention will engross,  
Instruct thee how to find its proper gloss :  
’Twas this that took him out of these confines.”

## CANTO XII.

THUS paired, like oxen moving in the yoke,  
I went with spirit with his heavy clog,  
As far as suffered gentle pedagogue :  
But when he said—"Leave him and burden now,  
For here 'tis good to try, with sail and oar,  
How far each one can push his bark before,"  
As one would wish to go, I drew myself upright ;  
To lift their crest my thoughts were not allowed.  
Remaining still diminished down and bowed,  
I moved myself, and followed willingly  
My master's steps. Already both had meant  
To show with what alacrity they went,  
When he said to me—"Turn thine eyes to earth ;  
It will be good for thee, to lighten way,  
To see the bed on which your footsteps lay."  
As, to the end that memory may be  
Above their sepulture in earthy tombs,  
Of what they were distinct resemblance comes,  
And oft from thence reissued have the tears  
Remembrance talons tear from out the breast,  
Whose stings let all except the piteous rest—  
'Twas such ; but the resemblance was more fine  
Through the artificer, and figured o'er  
Far as the mountain-way was stretched before.  
I saw that one, created noblest once  
Of any creature that the heavens can tell,  
Down falling there, and thundering as he fell,  
Saw Briareus, smitten by arrow

Celestial, prone at length another tale  
O'erweigh the earth, when struck by mortal hail :  
I saw Thymbræus—saw Pallas and Mars  
Still armed, and circling round their father's beams,  
And gazing on the giant's scattered limbs—  
Saw Nimrod, at the foot of mighty work,  
As if perplexed, regarding once again  
The race that were with him on Shinar's plain.  
O Niobe ! with what accusing tears  
I saw thee sculptured on the mountain strand !  
'Twixt seven and seven thy pierced ones stand.  
O Saul ! upon thine own and proper sword,  
Thy death Gilboa, too, had cause to rue,  
Revisited no more by rain nor dew.  
O mad Arachne ! I beheld in thee  
But half a spider, o'er the rent web climb  
Thou wrought'st, to work thee mischief in due time.  
O Rehoboam ! have thy frowns expired ?  
The dread has seized thee ere pursuers come,  
In thy shorn chariot and unpeopled home.  
Shows the hard pavement's ever-during lines,  
How dear Alcmæon made his mother pay  
For ornament, unfortunate display !  
It showed the sons who threw themselves upon  
Sennacherib in the temple, house of prayer,  
And how deprived of life they left him there.  
The ruin, and the cruel specimen,  
Tomyris made, dead Cyrus, who could tell,  
" For blood you thirsted—you may take your fill."  
It showed how in the rout Assyrians fled,  
When Holofernes in the fight was slain,

And all the relics of the bloody plain.  
Troy I saw, in cinders and in caverns.  
O Ilion ! how debased and low it lay,  
And flaunted signals of its own decay !  
What master of the pencil and of style  
Had drawn the shades, and all the actions round,  
To raise the wonder of the most profound ?  
The dead were dead, the living seemed alive :  
He saw not better who observed its truth,  
Than I, who stooped to see it full of ruth.  
Superbly stalk, and go with haughty look,  
Ye sons of Eve, incline not down your head  
To see the evil of the path you tread.  
More of the mountain we had turned, and more  
Of the sun's pathway was already crossed  
Than I imagined, with my mind engrossed,  
When he who always as he went looked out,  
Began to say—" Now raise your head aback ;  
The time is past to bend it as you walk.  
Behold on that side, where an angel comes,  
Approaching us, and handmaid of the day ;  
The sixth's returning from her daily way.  
With reverence your gesture, face, attire,  
So that with joy he lead us height to gain.  
Remember—this day never dawns again."  
His warning was familiar to mine ears.  
Not to lose time, and from the way 'twas put,  
The sense included was by no means shut.  
To us there came created being fair,  
In white, his countenance—as shoots afar  
The tremulous lustre of the morning star.

His arms he opened, and then opened wings,  
And said—"Come, for the steps you seek are near,  
And easily ascend the path you fear."  
At this announcement very few there came.  
O human race ! whose birthright is to soar,  
How little wind will make your course give o'er !  
He led us where the rock was cut away.  
I felt the beating of his wings in front,  
Which promised easier way for me to mount.  
As on the right hand, where you climb the mount  
Where sits the chapel, near where you account  
The well-conducted prays at Rubaconte,  
The hardy sheer ascent is broke by steps,  
Carved in its line at every point and stage,  
While yet records were safe in earlier age.  
And thus retarded is the steep which falls  
From other circuit, makes a precipice,  
And here and there the lofty rock will graze.  
While turning round about our persons there,  
"Blessed the poor in spirit," we hear men  
Sing, as if they said to us a sermon ;  
But, ah ! how different were those echoes from  
Th' infernal tones, notes that now approach us !—  
Here sweet song, and there laments ferocious.  
We now were mounting o'er the sacred steps,  
Easier to me ere yet ascent was o'er,  
And lighter far than was the plain before.  
"Master," I said, "what is the reason why  
I feel so lightened of my heavy load,  
With no fatigue, as 'twere, pursue the road?"  
"When all the Ps," he answered, "which remain

Charactered upon thy countenance now,  
Shall pass away like one that's left your brow,  
Your feet will be subdued to such good-will,  
Think not fatigue will any longer stay,  
Rather delight will urge you on your way."  
I did then just as they do who proceed  
With something on their head, though not aware,  
From other's signs suspecting it is there.  
I thought my hand would help to ascertain,  
And searched and found, and thus performed the task  
Which from the eyesight 'twas in vain to ask,  
And with the finger of the right hand found  
Six characters of letters still impressed,  
He of the keys above my temples traced.  
Upon regarding which my leader smiled.

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## CANTO XIII.

WHEN we were at the summit of the scale,  
Where secondly the mountain's cut away,  
The climbing which all evil will allay,  
There is another cornice girds the hill,  
Resembling first which round the base extends,  
Save that the arch of this one sooner bends:  
No shade is there, nor mark of aught appears  
Along the bank or on the rock-way plain,  
To rase the livid colour of its grain.  
"If here we wait to question company,"  
The poet reasoned, "I am much afraid



The choice we make will be too long delayed."  
Then fixedly upon the sun he looked,  
And from the right side, as from centre, moved,  
And the left side from his choice reproved.  
"Sweet light! in which I trust and enter now,  
By new roadway, conduct me where I would  
From hence, and lead me in the way pursued.  
The world thou warm'st, upon its face thou shin'st.  
If cause forbid not, on opposing side  
Thy rays in future be, as now, my guide."  
As far as here is counted for a mile,  
Thus far were we already on our way,  
In little time, unwilling to delay,  
The sound of flying and of flitting past  
Not visible, but spirits in their speech  
To love's own table courteously beseech.  
The first voice, passing by the spot, which flew—  
"They have no wine." The words it said aloud  
Reiterated while the air allowed;  
And ere the whole of these in distant space  
Had gone, another—"I am Orestes."  
Passing it cried, nor lingered flight to ease.  
"What sounds!" I said: "my father, what are these?"  
And while I asked, the third successive gone—  
"Love those who've done you evil," was the tone.  
The good master—"This circle plaits the whip  
Of envy's fault, and therefore are the words  
Which make the scourge of love, which draws the cords.  
The bridle must be of a different sound—  
At least, it is the drift of thought I form—  
At place where pardon frees them from alarm.



But fix your eyes attentive through the air,  
And you will see a race of people knit,  
Each one along the side of grotto sit.”  
Then more than at the first I opened eyes,  
Looked out, and saw the shades with mantles on,  
In colour not unlike the dark-hued stone.  
And when we were a little farther on,  
I heard them say—“ Maria, pray for us ;  
Michael, Peter, all saints ! ” uttered the voice.  
Not on earth’s surface, I believe, there walks  
A man so hard, whose heart would not relent,  
And feel for that which was to eyesight sent.  
When I approached to place adjoining them,  
So that their gestures clearly came along,  
My eyelids were with heavy sorrow wrung.  
In vilest sackcloth were they all attired,  
And on his shoulders each supported each,  
And bank supported all that bank could reach :  
And so the blind in poverty who pine,  
Stand at the pardonings, and declare their need,  
And thus recline each on the other’s head,  
Because, in others, pity takes its birth  
Not from the sound of words, but from the sight,  
Which plants as deep the feeling to requite.  
As to the sightless orb ne’er comes the sun,  
To those I speak of he would not dispense  
Heaven’s light to enter there, and issue thence ;  
For down their eyelids all the iron wire  
Is served without, their restless sight to tame,  
In manner such wild falcon they reclaim.  
It seemed, as I walked forward, outrage wrong

To look on others while myself unseen,  
Which made me to my leader's counsel lean.  
And well he knew what I, though mute, would say,  
And therefore waited not for my request :—  
“ Briefly to speak, and to the point, were best.”  
Virgil approached me on that border side  
Of cornice, whence 'twas possible to fall,  
For there no parapet ran round the wall.  
On other side there were the shades devout,  
And through their horrid patch the tear-drops break,  
And ran so fast, they moisten all the cheek.  
I turned me to them : “ O race ! who are secure  
To see,” I said, “ again the lofty light,  
And all your wishes and your cares requite,  
So may grace soon resolve the foam upon  
Your conscience ; lightly may it disappear,  
And river of the mind run bright and clear.  
Tell me—for 'tis a gracious thing to hear—  
If here a Latin spirit there may be,  
And good for him, perchance, myself to see.”  
“ O my brother ! each is a citizen  
Of one true city. So is he, shouldst say,  
Who lives a foreigner in Italy.”  
Thus I thought I heard an answer come  
A little more in front of where I stood,  
Which made me mark it better than I should.  
Among the rest I saw a shade waiting,  
Expectant. Should one ask the way I knew—  
His chin was raised like one deprived of view.  
“ Spirit,” I said, “ in training to ascend,  
If thou be he from whom the answer came,

Make me acquainted with thy place or name."

"I was Siennese, and, with these others here,

The evil life I wash away with tears,

Weeping to him, for his the Saviour's.

Nor yet a sage, though Sapia was my name,

More joyful when I heard what others rued,

Than even when I heard my own proper good.

And that you may not think that I deceive,

Hear if I was not, as I tell thee, bad.

My years, in lessening arch, descended had ;

My fellow-citizens were at Colle,

In field against their adversaries led :

I prayed to God for what he had decreed.

They were routed there—turned to the bitter

Steps of flight ; and as I beheld the chase,

The joy that seized me all the rest outweighs,

So that I raised above my hardy brow,

And cried to God—' Of Thee I careless am,"

As will the blackbird for a moment's calm.

In life's extremity I wished for peace

With God, and all my duty to fulfil :

The penitence abated not until

Pier Pettinagno remembered me,

And in his holy prayers my name expressed,

And through his charity it was increased.

But who art thou wouldst our conditions know,

And questionest with both thine eyelids free,

As I believe, and breathing talk'st to me ?"

"My eyes may here be for a space withdrawn,

And but a space ; for trifling the offence

Of glances envious which have issued thence.

Far greater is my fear where hangs my soul  
Suspended o'er the torments of below :  
The burden of those depths o'erweighs me now."  
And she to me—"Then who conducted here,  
Upward among us? Think'st thou to go down?"  
"The one with me, who word has uttered none.  
I am alive, and therefore me request,  
Spirit elect! if you desire to greet  
In motion there for thee my mortal feet."  
"Oh, what a novel thing is this to hear!  
Great sign it is that God himself's your friend:  
Then with thy prayer at times assistance lend.  
Entreating thee by what you most desire,  
If e'er you tread upon the Tuscan earth,  
Renew my fame where I received my birth.  
There will you see them 'mong that race so vain,  
Who put their hopes in Telamone's port,  
More than Diana's river under grot:  
A deeper loss their admirals have got."

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## CANTO XIV.

"Who winds, encircles thus our mountain way,  
Ere death has given him wherewithal he flies,  
And opes and shuts, just as he wills, his eyes?"  
"I know not who, but know he's not alone.  
You are the nearer, put some question terse;  
Salute him gently, lead him to converse."

Two spirits thus inclining to each other  
Of me were reasoning upon right hand,  
In order then to see me, backward leaned,  
And said the one—"O soul in body still  
Detained, who yet art tending to the skies!  
For charity console us, and apprise  
Whence thou comest, and who thou art, that makest  
Such marvel at the grace bestowed and seen,  
It seems like something that has never been."  
And I—"Through midst of Tuscany there spreads  
A little stream; Falterona sees it rise;  
Its course a hundred miles scarce satisfies.  
I took this person from its banks: 'twere vain  
To tell you who I am: let this suffice,  
My name as yet makes little noise."  
"If well your meaning I incorporate  
With intellect," he gave his answer so,  
Who first addressed me, "you speak of Arno?"  
And the other said to him—"Why does this  
Omit to say, that river's name conceal,  
As if 'twere something horrible to tell?"  
The shade, from whom demanded, thus replies:  
"I cannot tell; unworthy it is not  
That name of such a valley be forgot;  
For from its source where, pregnant to the full,  
The Alpine mount, from whence Pelorus torn,  
At some few spots o'ertops the place where born,  
Until it render back, in due account,  
That which from the sea the heaven exhales,  
Which in the fountain and the river swells,—  
Where Virtue's self is hated and pursued

Of all, as if it were a snake, through ill,  
Derived from place or misdirected will ;  
Whence is the nature so transformed they wear,  
Th' inhabitants of this sad wretched vale,  
'Twould seem that Circe bade her guests regale.  
Amid the brutish swine, for acorns fit,  
More than aught else to human use to turn,—  
Directs the waves of its impoverished urn.  
Descending lower, finds the snarling curs,  
Whose power is far unequal to their hate,  
Turns with disdainful nostril, leaves their gate,  
Rolls along falling, and the more enlarged,  
Dogs turned to wolves the changing scenes engross  
Of this accursed and malignant fosse.  
Through hollower basins afterwards descends,  
A race of foxes finds, so full of fraud,  
By all of wit and human skill unawed.  
Still must I speak, although another hear,  
And good for him to memory to consign  
What from true spirit I shall now untwine.  
I see thy grandson,—soon will he become  
A hunter of these wolves ; upon the brink  
Of the fierce river let his terrors sink.  
He sells the flesh of them that are alive,  
And slays them after, like an old wild beast.  
Many of life he robs, and of life's zest  
Himself, and issues bloody from the wood,  
When thousand years are past his havoc 's rued,  
Nor will the forest reacquire its wood.”  
As he announced the future's darkening loss,  
Dismay disturbed the face of him who hears,

Like one who knows not whence the storm appears,  
So saw I other spirit who had turned,  
Standing to hear, sadd'ning and overcast,  
When once the words across his senses passed.  
The speech of one, and other's sad aspect,  
To know their names my curious feelings fixed ;  
I put a question with entreaties mixed.  
The spirit then who first addressed me said—  
“ You wish for thee to do that I incline  
At thy request, who would not yield to mine.  
But since it is God's will his grace should shine  
Brightly, thus regard to claim, to look awe.  
Know that I am Guido del Duca !  
With envy so rekindled all my blood,  
That had I seen a man with joy bestead,  
My visage was with paleness overspread.  
Of such a seed such harvest I derive.  
O human race ! why set your heart on fate,  
Debarred of consort to participate ?  
This is Rinier, the worth and honour,  
Calboli, of thy house, where not a deed  
Remains to vouch the value of the breed.  
Not his alone the blood that 's robbed between  
The Po, the Mount, the Reno, and the sea,  
Of all the good for truth and pleasancy.  
Within these bounds the space is ever full  
Of venom'd stems, which slow indeed reward  
The toils of culture in a soil so hard.  
Where good Licio, Arrigo Manardi, where  
Pier Traversaro, Guido da Carpigna,  
And all the bastard children of Romagna,



When in Bologna strikes his roots a smith,  
In Faenza Bernardin di Fosco,  
A noble scion from a sapling low.  
Marvel not though I should weep, O Tuscan !  
Guido da Prata, when I call to mind,  
Ugolin of Azzo lived with us enshrined ;  
Frederigo Tignoso, with company,  
Traversaro's house and Anastagii,  
Each a disinherited family ;  
The ladies, the cavaliers, troubles, ease,  
The witchery of loving, courteous arts,  
Where malice now is cherished in their hearts.  
O Brettinoro ! why not fly at once,  
Since all thy family has fled before,  
To shun the evil way, and many more ?  
Well did Bagnacaval, too, seek no son,  
Ill Castracaro, and worse Conio,  
Their family with earls such as these t' endow ;  
And well Pagani, who the demon chase  
From out their home, albeit not so clear,  
But that a remnant proof shall linger there.  
O Ugolin of Tantoli ! thy name  
Is now secure no longer. You expect  
An heir to plunge thy name in dark neglect.  
Go thy way, Tuscan ! for far more delight  
Have I in weeping than in use of speech ;  
Our country's woes my inmost heart can reach."  
We knew that these dear spirits were aware  
Of our departure, and their silence made  
Our trust attend the path before us laid.  
We left them ; when we had proceeded on,



Like thunder pealing when the air is rent,  
A voice came near that was against us sent—  
“And whosoever finds me will slay me!”  
And fled as thunder vanishes away  
When the fleet lightning issues to obey.  
Scarcely our hearing had obtained a truce,  
When, lo! another noise, both quick and loud,  
Like the following of a thunder-cloud—  
“I am Aglauros, who became a stone!”  
And then I shrank, and to the bard drew near,  
Advanced not step, remaining in the rear,  
At every place already quiet air.  
“This rough bit,” he said, “will yet be found  
To keep each man within his proper bound ;  
But the bait so attracts you, that the hook  
Of the Old Adversary draws you all,  
Who little recks your curb and your recall.  
Heaven calls you. Unrolling, it displays  
Eternal beauties to a heavenward gaze ;  
Your eye seems fixed on earth, and it surveys,  
Hence He chastises who discerneth all.”

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## CANTO XV.

OF the sphere where the third hour ends to dawn,  
Appeared so much of its expanded way,  
Which moves for ever, like a child at play,  
As there appeared, extending to the even,  
The sun had yet to run of course of light.

'Twas evening there, and here 'twas dark midnight ;  
His rays were striking on the bridge of nose.  
The mountain-side we had already passed,  
Advancing now directly to the west,  
When I perceived that something struck my brow,  
Of greater splendour than appeared at first,  
And like a stupor on my senses burst.  
And thence I raised my hand to the summit  
Of my eyebrow to make me a sun-shade ;  
Shorn of its surplus, thus the light surveyed.  
As from the water or the mirror's face,  
To part opposed the ray is seen to dance,  
Ascending upward, as it were a glance,  
And then descending, must diverge as far  
From line of stone, descending in a haste,  
As our experience and art has placed ;  
Thus, with refracted light, appear to me  
The ground in front, struck with percussion, swift,  
And thence as swiftly was my vision reft.  
“ My gentle father ! what is this from which,  
With fencing off, I cannot guard my eyes,  
But what it wounds, advancing to surprise ? ”  
“ Marvel not if even yet should dazzle thee  
The family of heaven ! ” was his reply :  
“ He comes to invite you to a ground more high.  
Soon will it be to thee to see these things,  
Not grievous, but a source of fresh delight,  
As nature shall dispose thy sense aright.”  
When we had joined the blessed angel there,  
With joyful voice he said, “ Now enter here  
To climbing way, which is much less severe ! ”

We now ascended through the broken ground.  
"Blessed are the merciful," came from east,  
"And then rejoice thou that o'ercomest."  
My master and myself proceeded on ;  
And I was thinking, as the way I went,  
To draw some profit from the words they sent.  
Directing me to him, the question put,  
"What could that spirit of Romagna mean—  
Of consort barred—less happiness between ?"  
"His great defect and all its loss he knows.  
Let it not, then, thy admiration move—  
So they lament the less if he reprove—  
If thy desires should all take flight to where  
Companionship must needs divide thy share.  
'Tis envy blows, and hence thy sighs take air.  
But if the love that's from the sphere supreme  
Exalt thy wish above this lower earth,  
Within thy breast fear cannot find its birth ;  
For all the more that we can say is ours,  
So much the more does every one possess,  
And love burns brighter in its close recess."  
"Less satisfied am I than what I was,"  
I said, "than if I still had held my peace ;  
And in my mind still more the doubts increase.  
How can a good which is distributed  
Enrich the more all its possessors new  
By it, than if possessed but by a few ?"  
And he—"It is because that you refix  
The thoughts of mind upon terrestrial things,  
Which from the true light only darkness brings.  
Infinite and ineffable above

Itself, that good for ever runs to love,  
As to a body bright a ray will move.  
It gives as much of ardour as it finds ;  
So that, whenever it extends on earth,  
Increases o'er it its eternal worth.  
The higher knowledge that its scholars gain,  
The better love, and more are loved in turn,  
As mirrors with reflecting flashes burn.  
And if my reason cannot clear the way,  
Thou wilt see Beatrice, who will reveal  
Both this, and all imperfect lights conceal.  
Procure that soon obliterated quite,  
As two already are, the five you feel,  
Which, when they pain you, then begin to heal."  
I would have said—" You satisfy me now,"  
When I observed another circle's reach,  
Which claimed my wandering eyes, restrained my speech ;  
For I appeared to be in a vision  
Ecstatic—on a sudden rapt away,  
To see some persons in a temple stay.  
A lady, on her entering, with the mein  
Of dear mother, said—" Why hast thou, my son,  
Towards us, who are thy parents, thus done ?  
Behold ! sorrowing thy father and I  
Have sought thee." When this was no longer heard,  
That which I saw at first had disappeared.  
Appeared another then, washed by those streams,  
Down o'er the cheek, which painful grief distils,  
When great despite at heart the eyelids fills ;  
And said—" If thou art lord of this city,  
Whose name could strife among the gods inspire,

And from whose walls each science sparks like fire,  
 Avenge thyself upon those arms they saw  
 Our daughter durst embrace, Pisistratus !"  
 And her lord appeared benign and gracious,  
 To answer her with mild and temperate face—  
 "How to treat those by whom all good's contemned,  
 If he who loves us is by us condemned."  
 Then saw I crowd, with kindling fury fired,  
 With stones a young man slay who was alone,  
 And all loudly crying—"Down with him !—down !"  
 His neck declining with the stroke of death,  
 Which now had weighed him downward to the earth ;  
 But from his eyes the gates of heaven took birth ;  
 In such battle praying to the High Lord  
 That he would pardon persecution felt,  
 With that aspect that pity's self would melt.  
 But when my mind returned to view again  
 The things whose truth's beyond the fancy's power,  
 Saw it had not wandered into error.  
 My leader, as he looked, beheld me then  
 And as a man unwinds himself from sleep.  
 "What's," said he, "the matter ? You cannot keep  
 Your way ; you've come, for half a league and more,  
 With eyes veiled up, and with no discipline  
 In limbs, like one bowed down by sleep or wine."  
 "O my dear father ! if you will listen,  
 I will tell thee," I said, "that which I saw,  
 Which out of rule my reckless limbs could draw."  
 And he—"If you had even twenty masks  
 Upon your face, no thought of yours were shut  
 From me, though small, which I observed not.

That which thou saw'st was that thou might'st not shun  
Thy heart to open to the waves of peace,  
Which from the eternal fountain find increase.  
I asked not—What's the matter? for the cause  
That prompts the question of terrestrial eye  
Quenched, with a form that soon will lifeless lie.  
I asked to add another force to foot :  
Such are the goads the flagging steps require,  
To use their watch and rouse their sleeping fire.”  
Attentive, on we through the evening went,  
Far as the eye could stretch its lengthening line,  
To meet the rays that linger while they shine ;  
And lo ! by slow degrees a mist came on  
Towards us—dark, and, like the night, obscure ;  
Nor was there place a refuge to insure :  
Robbed us of eyes, and of the air so pure.

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## CANTO XVI.

THE smoke infernal, and a night deprived  
Of every planet, 'neath a wretched sky,  
Such as the cloud of darkness could supply,  
Ne'er wrapped my eyesight in so thick a veil  
As smoke that now enveloped everywhere—  
Even to the sense a rough unpleasant air,  
That would not suffer eyelids to uncloze ;  
And hence my knowing and my faithful guide  
Offered me shoulder, and drew near my side.

And as a blind man goes behind his guide,  
Not to lose himself, nor stumble by the way  
On what would hurt, or even what might slay,  
So went I onward through the bitter air,  
Attending to the counsel of my guide,  
Who told me not to try to quit his side.  
I heard the sound of voices : each appeared  
For peace, for mercy, in their words to pray  
To Lamb of God, who takes the sins away.  
With "Lamb of God" was their exordium made ;  
One word in all, one measure in the sound,  
So that in all a harmony was found.  
"Are these, then, spirits, master, which I hear?"  
Said I. And he—"You rightly apprehend :  
The seal of wrath to unloose in progress tend."  
"Now who art thou, who thus can cleave our smoke,  
And talk'st of us, and whom thy speech commends  
As one who reckons time by the calends?"  
Thus was it uttered by a single voice.  
And hence my master said to me—"Reply ;  
Ask if from hence there be a way on high."  
And I—"O creature ! come to wash thy stains,  
Fair to return to Him who made thee first,  
Marvel thou'lt see, if thou the barrier burst."  
"I'll follow thee as far as 'tis allowed,"  
Replied he. "If the smoke forbid to see,  
More fit for hearing will the juncture be."  
Then I—"It was with this same coil I came,  
Which death dissolves, led, as you see, on high,  
And passing through infernal agony."  
If God has willed, in his exceeding grace,

So much, as me to court to introduce  
In mode so far removed from modern use,  
Conceal not from me what you were before—  
Tell me if I go rightly to the mark,  
And to thy words, as to a guide, we'll hark."  
" Lombard I was, and Marco was my name ;  
I knew the world, and well that worth descried  
From which each battle-bow now starts aside.  
Mounting you are directly by the way."  
Thus he replied ; and added, " I request  
Your prayers when you've gained the mountain-crest."  
And I—" I pledge myself to fulfil that  
Which you request of me ; but I would fain  
Resolve a doubt which I cannot explain.  
My first perplexity's redoubled now  
In that late sentence which I heard from thee,  
With one heard elsewhere, to accompany.  
The world—is it so desert, then, and void  
Of every virtue now as you have said,  
And, in their room, with malice overspread ?"  
I prayed he would impart to me the cause,  
That I might see, and also elsewhere show,  
Whether in heaven above, or earth below.  
Then the deep sigh that sorrow wrung from him  
He first dismissed, and then he said—" My brother,  
The blind world !—you come not from another ;  
And you who live would draw down every cause  
From heaven, as if it were in fetters held,  
Self-moved, and by necessity impelled.  
If it were so, your free-will were destroyed ;  
Justice would joy no longer in the good,



Nor with the ill the struggle be renewed.  
Your movements heaven itself originates—  
Not to say all—but the truth to call this,  
Light's given to benevolence, and to malice  
Free-will, which struggles on, and is fatigued  
In its first battles with the heaven, endures,  
Entirely conquers, if new grace nurtures  
To greater force, and better nature comes.  
When free, a worldly mind itself from thence  
May find enough reflection to convince.  
If by the present world you lose your way,  
The fault is in yourselves—you, I reply ;  
And me you'll find, I'm sure, a truthful spy.  
It issues from the hand of Him who saw,  
Before the birth, the child that it would be,  
And weeps and laughs, and throws its accents free—  
The soul simplicity that nothing knows,  
Save that rejoicing a Creator made.  
Hence to the path of joy the infant strayed,  
Tasted at first the sense of slightest good ;  
Deceived in this it runs without a rein,  
No guide or curb its passion to restrain.  
Hence laws originate to form the curb—  
Hence kings, with kingly and discerning power,  
To point at least the way to heavenly tower.  
And laws there are, but who attends to them ?  
None ; for the leading shepherd stands aloof,  
Can chew the cud, but not divide the hoof.  
Because the people who their pastor see  
Strike at the good they most desire to have,  
Find food in this, and care not to improve ;

And evil conduct surely is the cause  
The world still wanders, and still falls abrupt,  
And not the nature in you that's corrupt.  
Rome was accustomed, when the times were good,  
To have two suns on either side unfurled,  
The emblem one of God—one of the world.  
The one has quenched the other, and the sword  
Is joined with pastoral crook by living force :  
One and the other must decline to worse,  
Because, when joined, their several fears are lost.  
If you think not, consider, then, the blade,  
That by the seed herb's nature is betrayed.  
On land that's watered by th' Adige and Po,  
Valour and courtesy can no longer grow,  
Since first Frederigo's quarrel learned to blow.  
Securely now may any pass that way,  
Whoe'er for shame has left the social food,  
The company and converse of the good.  
In three old men the antique age rebukes  
The new, and long, because their days are rife,  
Till God replace them in a better life :  
Conrad of Pelazzo, good Gherardo,  
Guido da Castel, whom his friends reward  
By frankly calling him the plain Lombard.  
Henceforward we infer that Church of Rome,  
Two disciplines confounding, which she wears,  
Falls in the mire, and soils the load she bears."  
" O Marcus," said I, " you have reasoned well ;  
Why no heritage, I can now discern,  
Came to the sons of Levi in their turn.  
But what Gherardo's that, who, as you say,

Remains the example of a perished age—  
Reproach of that which now is on the stage ?”  
“ I or mistake your words, or else they're meant  
To try ; your tongue the Tuscan language bears,  
And yet Gherardo has not reached your ears !  
I know no other surname he can have,  
Unless his daughter Gaïa add to store.  
God be with you ; I go with you no more.  
See how the dawn is struggling through the smoke  
With whitening ray, and I must leave you here—  
The angel's there—before that he appear.”  
Spoke thus, and would not hear me any more.

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## CANTO XVII.

REMEMBEREST, reader ! ever in the Alps,  
A cloud to pierce, thy sight in vain would cope,  
Like mole through membrane and diminished scope ?  
So was it when the vapours, moist and thick,  
Came showering down in mist, and when the sphere  
Of sun could gain but feeble entrance there ;  
And let imagination now be quick  
T' arrive at what I thought when I reviewed  
The sun, low couching, with the clouds imbued—  
Thus keeping equal pace with faithful steps  
Of master, issuing from the cloud that lowers ;  
When now the rays had died upon the shores.  
How canst thou thus, Imagination ! rob

So oft of self of all perception round,  
Although a thousand trumpets were to sound ?  
And what can move thee, if the senses fail ?  
Can light alone, to which descent is given,  
Or of itself, or at the wish of heaven ?  
Of that impiety which changed her form  
To that of bird, which so delights in song,  
An image formed—I could not trace it long.  
And here my mind was closed, and so detained  
Within, that nothing outward, it appears,  
Which happened to arrive, could reach its ears.  
On this high fantasy a shower came down—  
One crucified, spiteful, too, and fierce  
In countenance, such as when he died ; appears  
The great Ahasuerus ; stood around  
Esther his spouse, and Mordecai the just,  
In whose word, in whose deed, each one could trust.  
And as this image, too, had broke away  
Itself alone, and like a bubble burst,  
For want of water which it had at first,  
Arose there in my vision youthful girl,  
Lamenting sore, and weeping, said—“ O queen !  
In ire to wish that thou hadst never been—  
To slay thyself, Lavinia not to lose,  
Me hast thou destroyed, for ever rueing  
Thine, thine only, not the other’s ruin.”  
As breaks upon our sleep the light that strikes  
Anew upon the face with half its fires,  
That glides in fragments till it all expires ;  
So was th’ imagined form, declining down,  
Soon as the light upon my countenance struck—

Far greater light than that to which we look.  
T' examine where I was, I turned around,  
When I heard a voice say—" 'Tis here you mount ;"  
Which made me of the rest take no account.  
My wishes now were ready all, and prompt  
To look upon the face of him who spake,  
And scarcely paused opposing stand to take.  
But as the sun molests the gazer's sight,  
Its superfluity its figure veils,  
And here my virtue, in like manner, fails.  
" A Divine Spirit this, before we ask,  
The way direct to go on high reveals,  
And with his native light himself conceals.  
He acts with us as man does with himself—  
Face of entreaty, need though he espy,  
Sets himself ill-naturedly to deny :  
To invitation such accorded feet,  
To climb the way which darkness makes forlorn,  
Not to be tried unless the day return."  
So said my leader then, and he and I  
Our footsteps turned to an ascending stair ;  
And at the first step scarcely was I there,  
When I perceived the motion of a wing  
Fanning my face, and " Blessed are the peace-  
Makers ! for then their angry passions cease."  
Lifted already o'er our heads there were  
The last of rays, before the night succeed—  
The stars began, in wider range, to lead.  
" O, feeble strength of man ! why so relax ?"  
I said within me ; for I felt my knees  
In posture bending, and demanding ease.

We were now where there was no more to climb  
Of stair above, and set ourselves to moor,  
Just like a vessel that has reached the shore.  
I stood attentive for a while to hear  
The sound of something in the round untried ;  
Then said, in turning to my master's side—  
“ My gentle father ! tell me what offence  
Is purged within the circle where we are.  
Though the feet stand, your words you need not bar.”  
“ The love of good, but of performance scant,  
This is the place that duty to restore—  
For lagging, here to take the labouring oar.  
But that you may the better understand,  
Now turn your mind to me, and take away  
Some fruit at least, to season your delay.  
Neither Creator nor the creature were  
E'er” he began, “ my son, devoid of love,  
Natural or of the mind, and that you prove.  
The natural, from error ever free ;  
Through evil object might the other err,  
From too much or from too little vigour,  
While on the good original they dwell.  
With sober steps the second seek aright—  
Not either can afford a false delight.  
When to the ill they turn with too much care,  
Or less than what they ought to good they run,  
The work rebels against him by whom 'twas done ;  
And hence 'tis possible to comprehend,  
Love of each virtue will the germ remain,  
And of each work, besides, that merits pain.  
From its loved object's wealth, I say, because

To turn the face love never can endure,  
From hatred of one's self is everything secure :  
A love divided none can comprehend,  
Or standing by itself from first apart—  
From hate like that is each affection barred.  
It follows, then, if my division's good,  
The ill we love is in our neighbour's way :  
That in three modes arises in our clay.  
There is, in order neighbour to suppress,  
Who would excel, himself, his sole desire  
Grandeur, that sees another in the mire :  
There is who power, grace, and honour, fame,  
Still fears to lose, because the rest surpass,  
Grows sad, and loves the counteracting cause :  
There is who, for injurious affront,  
Revenge desires, thirsts for another's pain,  
And hence to ill of others must attain.  
Here underneath, this threefold love laments.  
The other now I wish that you should know,  
Which runs to good, but with corrupted law.  
A good each one confusedly apprehends  
The mind to quiet—satisfy desire ;  
Hence to attain 't will every one conspire.  
If slow-winged love is to be seen, it draws  
Them on t' acquire this cornice to reflect—  
With penal thoughts to weep the past neglect.  
Another love there is, no source of bliss,  
Felicity is not, nor yet the root—  
Essential germ of any noble fruit ;  
And love, abandoning itself too far  
To this, is wept above through circles three.

Of tripartite I will not talk with thee :  
Thy search a silent commentary be."

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## CANTO XVIII.

To his reasoning when the lofty teacher  
Had put an end, he looked on me intent,  
Into my face, for what he hoped content ;  
And I, whose new-born thirst was yet unslaked,  
Uttered no outward sound, but said within,  
" My too much questioning oppresses him."  
My faithful father, as he looked, perceives  
The timid wish unopened yet in words—  
New ardour, as he spake, of speech affords.  
Then I—" Master ! my sight arrives so quick  
At light of thine, I see already clear  
Whate'er thy reason brings and makes appear.  
I beg of thee, my gentle father ! then,  
Love to unfold, from which you thus deduce  
All deeds, both bad and good, it can produce."  
" Direct," he said to me, " the keenest sight  
Of intellect, in order to discern  
All that they blindly teach who ought to learn.  
The mind whose nature is to run to love,  
And move at once to object which can please,  
Awakening to its pleasure and its ease.  
Your apprehension from true being draws ;  
The purpose of the mind expands within ;



On it the mind can rest contemplating.  
Itself regarding, if it then inclines,  
'Tis love inclines, and nature is the cause  
Which from the novelty a pleasure draws.  
And after, when the fire ascends on high,  
Since such its form, and at its birth it soars  
To where its own material endures,  
The mind, thus seized on, enters on desire :  
A motion spiritual, hence can never rest,  
Till of the object which it loves possessed.  
Now may you see how hid the truth from those,  
That race of people who can bear to tell  
That every love itself is laudable,  
Because material seems ever good :  
But yet the form imprinted in the tracks  
May not partake the goodness of the wax."  
"Your words, my genius ! following, both perceive,"  
Said I, "discover well what love may be ;  
But this itself has raised new doubts in me.  
If love be thus presented from without,  
In course no other if the mind proceed,  
Or right or wrong, to us belongs no need."  
"As far as reason can assist us here,  
I'll tell thee ; and whate'er's beyond," he saith,  
"Expect from Beatrice : 'tis the work of faith.  
Each form substantial, which is part of whole  
Of matter formed, and will to matter join,  
Specific virtue must in it combine,  
Without it operates is not perceived,  
Itself demonstrates only by effect ;  
As the green leaves the life of plant detect.

For there, from whence the intellect proceeds,  
Of its first notices man knows not aught,  
Nor of the appetite's affections root :  
In you, like inclination in the bee  
To make its honey ; and at first desire,  
No praise it merits, nor can blame inspire.  
Now as in this each other it collects,  
Innate the virtue that has counsel lent,  
And keeps herself the threshold of assent.  
This is the principle from which you take  
The cause of merit thine ; and the second,  
To take and sift loves, good and bad is reckoned.  
And they who, reasoning, reached the depth profound,  
Encountering innate liberty in this,  
Bequeathed morality to world remiss.  
Hence we infer that from necessity  
Each love arises that takes fire within ;  
In you the power continues to retain.  
Beatrice noble virtue understands  
To be free will ; and keep that in thy mind,  
To speak if she should take into her mind."  
The moon, which waited nearly to midnight,  
Made every star appear more bright and clear,  
Like a brass bucket that was all on fire,  
And ran against the heaven by that ascent  
The sun inflames, when he at Rome regrets,  
Between Sardinia, Corsica he sets.  
That gentle spirit, who Pietola gave  
A name still greater than the Mantuan fame,  
Removed th' oppression that almost o'ercame.  
Now that my questions had at length obtained

The cause unfolded, manifest and plain,  
I stood like one in sleep, whose thoughts are vain.  
This somnolency soon was ta'en away  
By sudden concourse of a race that turned  
Behind our shoulders, and the pavement spurned.  
Such have Ismenus and Asopus seen  
Upon their banks, at night, with fury tread,  
When their own Thebes required from Bacchus aid ;  
Such through the circle plied that fleeter step,  
Through which I saw them spurred by strong desire,  
Whom wishes good, affections strong inspire.  
And soon they came upon us, for they ran  
The whole of that exceeding multitude ;  
And two in front cried then, with tears imbued—  
“ Maria went into the hill country  
With haste. Cæsar, Iberda to attain,  
First stung Marseilles, then hastened into Spain.”  
“ Quick—quick !” they cried, “ that time may not be lost  
Through little love, and season be in vain ;  
For love of good makes grace grow fresh again.”  
“ O race ! in whom keen ardour now fulfils,  
Perhaps, your former negligent delay,  
The tepid heat of good's retreating day,  
This one who lives—'tis truth, I do not lie—  
Would climb, should sun again the light unlock :  
Direct him nearest to the hollowed rock.”  
These were the words were uttered by my guide.  
Of these surrounding spirits, said a soul—  
“ Come after us, and thou shalt find the hole.  
So full of that good-will to move are we,  
And rest not, pardon if this vassal speed

Like officer of justice should proceed.  
Abbot in San Zeno, at Verona,  
Was I the time when Barbarossa reigns,  
Whom, when she mentions, Milan still complains ;  
Where one there is, with one foot in the grave,  
Who soon that monastery's fate will weep,  
And grieve o'er power abused, that will not sleep ;  
Because his son, of body evil all,  
And of worse mind, who was of evil birth,  
He placed in room of him of pastoral worth."  
I know not if he ceased, and spoke no more,  
So far already had they passed beyond ;  
But this I heard, and in my memory found.  
And he who brought his aid in time of need,  
Said—"Turn to this, and contemplate these two, .  
Like sluggards come, compunction-struck and slow."  
Behind them all, these cried—"The first were they  
Who died, for whom the sea a passage spares,  
Before the Jordan could behold its heirs ;  
And they who shunned still farther to endure,  
To reach the end with old Anchises' son,  
To life devoid of glory willing run."  
When now, from us so far removed before,  
These shades already were beyond our sight,  
Within me novel thoughts spring up to light ;  
So that, in a reverie from one to one,  
My eyes were closed, and contemplation done—  
Reflective thought had turned to sleep, alone.

## CANTO XIX.

THE hour when now the last diurnal heat  
No more allays the coldness of the moon,  
Subdued by earth, or Saturn looking down ;  
When better fortune geomancers see,  
In orient space before the coming dawn,  
Rising in pathway of retiring brown ;  
A stammering woman in my sleep there came,  
Oblique her eyes, distorted in her feet,  
Of colour pale, nor yet her hands complete.  
I looked upon her, and as sunshine warms  
The coldest members which the night congeals,  
So, at my glance, her tongue its freedom feels ;  
And straightway she erect in form became ;  
And her bewildered face, no more the same,  
At love's own wish was coloured with its flame.  
After, when once her speech was disengaged,  
To sing commenced ; and scarce could I refrain  
To pay attention to her soothing strain.  
"I am," she sang, "I am the Syren sweet,  
Who in the sea the mariners beguile :  
So full of pleasure is the sound the while.  
I drew Ulysses from his course astray.  
Imprisoned by my song, whoe'er frequent  
Can seldom leave't, enveloped in content."  
And scarcely had the Syren closed her mouth,  
When came a lady, pious and alert,  
Close to my side, to shame her by desert.  
"O Virgil ! Virgil ! tell me who is this ?"

She fiercely said ; and he approached at once,  
Fixed eyes upon that modest countenance.  
She seized the other—opened her in front :  
Her robes tore open, and her belly showed,  
That waked me with the stench that thence o'erflowed.  
I turned my eyes, and the good Virgil spoke :  
“ Three times at least I've called thee ; rise and come,  
And we shall find to enter ample room.”  
I rose up then, and all the circling gyres  
Of sacred mountain of high-day were full ;  
With new sun on our reins advanced we still.  
I bore my front, in following, such a way  
As he whom overwhelming thoughts surcharge,  
Who makes himself the semblance of mid arch.  
I heard one utter—“ Come, this is the way,”  
In such a manner, gentle and benign,  
This mortal race could not the sounds combine.  
With wings outspread, which like the swan's appeared,  
I heard his accents as he led us high  
Through the two sides of solid masonry ;  
He moved his plumes, and fanned us with their sway.  
Affirming then that they who mourn are blest,  
For consolation gives their spirits rest,  
“ What is't—why thus contemplate ye the ground ?”  
Began my guide to say to me, surprised :  
Higher than both the angel I agnised.  
And I—“ In such suspended thoughts I go,  
Such as new vision only could inspire,  
That from such musing I cannot retire.”  
“ Hast thou seen,” said he, “ that old enchantress,  
For whom the beings which are o'er us weep ?

Can'st tell how mortal from her toils may keep ?  
Enough," said he, "enough to spurn the earth ;  
Revert thine eyes to mighty wheels, the lure  
The eternal King whirls o'er thee to endure."  
As falcon first will look upon her feet,  
Then answer call, expand her wings to fly  
In eagerness for food, the lure on high :  
Twas thus I did ; and where the rock divides  
To give an entrance to the upper way,  
Advanced to where the opening circle lay.  
On gyre the fifth disclosed I stood at ease,  
And saw a race who lay along it prone,  
And weeping on the ground, and looking down.  
"My soul is cleaving to the dust," they said—  
For so I heard, although 'twas drowned in sighs  
That scarce I could the sentence recognise.  
"Elect of God ! the sufferings that ye feel,  
Justice and hope will render less severe ;  
Direct us where the higher ways appear."  
"If uncondemned you are to be supine,  
And with that swiftness may your way betide,  
See that your right is ever to outside."  
Thus prayed the poet, and 'twas thus replied,  
In front of us. A little hence, I found,  
From what they said, their undiscovered ground,  
And turned my eyes to meet my liege lord's sight ;  
Hence he assented with a cheerful sign,  
To that request which seemed the wish of mine.  
When I was free to follow what I wished,  
I moved to where that creature was below,  
Whose words before had made me note his woe.



“Spirit,” I said, “in sorrow that matures  
That without which to God you cannot turn,  
Pause for a while thy weightier cares to mourn ;  
Who were you—wherefore are your backs above ?—  
And tell me if you wish me to obtain  
Aught whence I come, and whither would attain  
Alive.” And he—“ ’Tis thus reversed we lie,  
By heaven’s decree ; but be thou first aware,  
I was successor to Saint Peter’s chair.  
Between Siestri and Chiaveri falls  
A lively rivulet, and from its name  
My blood their lofty titled lineage claim.  
One month, a little more, I felt the weight  
Of robe, when one would guard it from the mire,  
All other weights to equal that conspire.  
Alas for my conversion ! it was slow ;  
But when the Roman pastor I became,  
Life I discovered, and its lying game.  
I saw that it could not appease the heart,  
Nor yet that life ascend to something high ;  
The kindling thoughts of this the want supply.  
Till that I was a wretched soul, removed from God,  
My avaricious heart desiring all ;  
And this the punishment on such to fall.  
That which avarice does is here discharged,  
And purged within converted spirit’s mind :  
No bitterer pain is on the mount assigned.  
Even as our eye was ne’er exalted to the heaven,  
But fixed our gaze upon terrestrial things,  
So to the earth just retribution brings.  
To every good as avarice quenched our love,



Without the which each operation's vain,  
So justice wills our wandering to restrain,  
Both in the hands and feet confined and pressed,  
Long as the Just One pleases we shall be  
On earth extended thus immovably.”  
With bending knees inclined I, to address ;  
As I began, with ear the act he weighed—  
That sense perceived the reverence that I made :  
“What is the reason that you're bowing down ?”  
And I—“It is your dignity's the force,  
And conscience just, for pungent is remorse.”  
“Make straight your bent limbs—rise up, my brother,”  
He said—“am not thy fellow-servant I,  
And all the others, of a Power on high ?  
Hast thou ne'er heard the evangelic sound,  
Which says ‘they neither marry’ sent to us ?  
Well may you discover why I reason thus.  
Now, go away—I wish thee not to stop ;  
Thy standing here 's a hindrance to my tears,  
Maturing that which lately reached my ears.  
A niece still there I have, Alagia,  
Good of herself, if our example loose  
Has not corrupted a degenerate house :  
And she alone remaining to me there.”

## CANTO XX.

'Tis ill to fight against a better will :  
Against my pleasure, and at his good-will,  
I drew the sponge away before 'twas full.  
I moved myself, my guide then also moved  
By expeditious way along the rock,  
Where the rude battlements the gateway lock—  
Where race that drop by drop pours down from eyes ;  
The ill that seizes on the whole of world,  
On other part, without too near, was hurled.  
Accursed be thou, old and greedy wolf !  
Devouring more than any beast of prey,  
For limit none thy hunger will obey.  
O heaven ! in whose revolving time we think  
Conditions here below are changed at will,  
When shall we see the one to chase this ill ?  
Our onward steps were lingering and uneven ;  
And I attentive to the shades, I heard  
Piteously weeping, with lamenting word.  
It happened that I heard " Sweet Maria !"   
In front of us pronounced amid the cry,  
As lady will as birth of child draws nigh.  
Perceiving, then, " How poor thy refuge showed !  
The poorest travellers, the chance abode,  
Prepared for thee and for thy sacred load."  
There followed then, " O good Fabricius !  
That poverty with virtue more desired  
Than riches great, with vice besides, acquired."

These words to me were pleasing in the extreme,  
So that I still went on to take more heed  
Of him, the spirit whence the words proceed.  
Already spoke he of the angel gift  
Which Nicolas bestowed on maiden's truth,  
To lead to honour their unsullied youth.  
"O spirit ! that relat'st such tale of worth,  
Tell me who you were ?" I said ; " wherefore you  
Praiseworthy stories such as these renew ?  
Your word perhaps may meet a due reward,  
Should I return to fill the shortened space  
Of life that flies to reach the goal of race."  
And he—" I'll tell thee, not for comfort's sake  
That I expect from thee, but for the grace,  
While yet alive, that shines upon your face.  
I was the root of that pernicious plant  
That casts a shade on all the Christian land,  
From whence good fruit but rarely breaks to hand.  
Doagio, Guanto, Lilla, Bruggia,  
Had they the power, the vengeance soon must fall,  
Which I beseech from Him who judges all.  
Ugo Ciapetta I was called ; from me  
Philippi and Luigi have their birth,  
Who rule but newly o'er Francia's earth :  
Parigian butcher was my lawful sire.  
When all the ancient kings were gone away,  
Excepting one who wore the weeds of gray,  
I found my hands had grasped the reins of power  
That rule the kingdom ; such the influence,  
When new acquired and numerous friends dispense,  
That, to the widowed crown promoted soon,

My son had placed its hoop around his head,  
From whence sacred kingly bones descended.  
While yet the great Provenzal dowery gift  
Had scarcely ta'en the shame from off my blood,  
It wrought not evil though it wrought not good.  
But force and falsehood then began the sway  
Of rapine ; seized, as compensation high,  
On Poitou, Normandy, and Gascony.  
Carlo came to Italy ; as some amends,  
Conradine's death another victim lends,  
Tommaso's sent to heaven to make amends.  
I see the time, it is not much beyond,  
That brings another Carlo out of France,  
Of him, of his, to make more acquaintance.  
Without arms issued, lance or stave alone  
That Judas jousted with, with bitter wrench  
That pierced fair Florence, and that tore its paunch.  
No land to conquer there but sin and shame,  
The heavier that it has a lighter name.  
The other, prisoner, stepping from the ships,  
Selling his daughter, bargains, I perceive,  
As Corsairs do with any other slave.  
O avarice ! what canst thou more effect ?  
Our blood to make to thee so keenly drive,  
For our own flesh we care not, if we thrive.  
For less appears the future evil done,  
Alagna entered by the fleur-de-luce,  
Christ in his vicar captive to reduce ;  
I see him once again betrayed and mocked,  
I see renewed the vinegar and gall,  
The head betwixt the robbers doomed to fall.

Another Pilate, cruel, not content,  
With no decree, his future purpose veils,  
Enters the temple with his eager sails.  
“My Lord! oh, when shall I behold the sight,  
And see thy vengeance opened which is hid,  
That soothes thy wrath until accomplished?  
That which I say of her, the only spouse  
Of Holy Spirit, which makes thee inquire,  
And turn to me some insight to require,  
So much disposed to listen to our prayers  
While daylight lasts: but when the night draws on  
A different sound to season will belong.  
Pygmalion’s fate allotted we prolong.  
The traitor, robber, parricide who saw,  
His only wish the gold within his maw:  
The avaricious Midas’ misery,  
Allowed th’ ingredients of his cup to quaff,  
To make succeeding ages see and laugh:  
And foolish Achan every one records,  
Whose were the spoils; but the pursuing ire  
Of Joshua stings and sets his heart on fire.  
Sapphira and her husband we accuse;  
Extol the feet which Heliodorus smote.  
Of infamy the mountain echoed note,  
‘Polymnestor, who slew Polidorus!’  
And last of all a voice, that Crassus told,  
‘Say, for you know it, what’s the taste of gold?’  
Thus spoke alternately, now high, now low,  
Just as affection prompts and tongue conveys,  
Now for a greater, now a lesser space.  
Wherefore of good on which the day dilates,

Not singly I had spoke before ; but here  
No other voice, except my own, was near.”  
Already we had parted from his side,  
And bent our efforts to surmount the way,  
Far as we could, where obstacles delay ;  
When I perceived, like something which had fallen,  
The mountain tremble, which congealed my breath,  
Seized me like one approaching to his death :  
For surely Delos never shook so strong  
Before Latona made of it her nest,  
Twin eyes of heaven unclosing at her breast.  
At every part commencing then a cry,  
Such that my master turned to me, and said,  
“ Doubt not as long as I shall be your guide ! ”  
“ Glory in the highest be unto God ! ”  
From what I understood of neighbouring rounds  
When I could catch the meaning of the sounds.  
Immovable we stayed, and in suspense ;  
Like shepherds when they first perceived the song,  
Until the tremor ceased, and all was done.  
Our holy path we then resumed, and watched  
To see the shadows on the earth recline,  
And to the dews their wonted grief consign.  
Never did ignorance such warfare make,  
Increase desire, and make me thirst to know,  
Unless my memory ’s impaired and slow,  
As then I seemed so full of thought to grow,  
Nor yet for haste could venture to demand,  
Nor of myself see anything at hand.  
Timid and thoughtful thus I went along.

## CANTO XXI.

THE thirst so natural, that 's never quenched  
Save with the water that the woman of  
Samaria asked, without a flask or trough,  
Was troubling me, and haste impelled me on  
Along th' impeded path, behind my guide,  
Condoling on just vengeance satisfied.  
Lo ! as in his gospel writes St Luke,  
That Christ appeared to two of them in way,  
Already risen from sepulchral stay,  
'Twas thus a shade appeared, behind us came,  
Reviewing crowd that lay beneath his feet,  
With us joined company, the first to greet,  
Saying, " My brothers ! may God give you peace ! "  
We turned upon the sudden ; and Virgil,  
Returning the salute, which suited well,  
Began to say—" In the blessed council  
May the faithful court in peace thy fortune put,  
Which me to endless exile did allot ! "  
" How ! " said he, " and wherefore advance so bold,  
If you be shades whom God accounts unfit ?  
Who showed you ladder, led you up by it ? "  
My teacher—" Then, if you regard the signs  
Which this one bears, and which the angel drew,  
You'll see he will the reign of good review.  
Clotho, who ever spins by day and night,  
Undrawn by her, as yet, the distaff line  
Which she appoints and twines for every one.

His spirit sister is to mine and thine,  
When coming hither could not come alone,  
Since his regard is different from our own.  
Hence was I drawn from out the ample gulf  
Infernal region to display to him,  
Far as my school may have the grace to climb.  
But tell me, if you can, why shook the mount  
A little since, and universal shout  
Rose from the hill, down to its softened foot ? ”  
His question answered to my very wish,  
And hope renewed and freshened, as at first,  
Diminished thus the craving of my thirst.  
He began—“ There ’s not a thing beyond the line  
The sacred order of the mount permits,  
Nor aught where law of usage intermits.  
From every alteration it is free,  
But that which comes from heavenly moving laws,  
The real here, and the existing cause.  
Wherefore it is nor rain, nor hail, nor snow,  
Beyond the stair of three short steps, can fall ;  
Nor the dark clouds, nor yet the thin, appear ;  
Nor flash, nor that fair daughter that’s admired,  
Changing her place, with novelty inspired,  
Nor the dry vapour, can encroach beyond  
The top of the three steps of which I spoke,  
Where Peter’s vicar first his station took.  
Tremble, perhaps, it may, or less or more,  
Beneath, through wind that’s in the mountain hid :  
I know not how, but here it is forbid.  
Tremble it does when any cleansing soul  
Perceives it, so that it may rise or move



To mount on high, and shout resounds above.  
Of purity the will alone is proof,  
With perfect liberty to choose its friends,  
The soul surprises and rejoicing tends.  
Good at the first desires but human will ;  
Justice divine in time makes discontent,  
As prone to sin, so ready for torment.  
And I, who now have lain so long in pain—  
Five hundred years and more—even at the time,  
Felt a fresh longing for a happier clime ;  
And hence you felt the trembling of the hill,  
And all the pious spirits rendering praise  
To Lord above, who soon on high conveys.”  
Thus spoke, and I as one the draught enjoys  
In that proportion that his thirst was great,  
My zest, I cannot tell you how complete.  
And the wise leader now—“ I see the net  
Which takes you here, the wind that sets you free—  
Why shakes the mount, and why rejoice all ye.  
But let it please thee to inform me who  
You were ; how for so many ages prone,  
Here, in this place, let your expressions own.”  
“ In the time the good Titus, with the aid  
Of the High King, avenged the open rent  
Whence flowed the blood that Judas sold ; content  
With lasting name, and one that ’s honoured most,  
Was I. From that,” the spirit thus replied,  
“ With fame enough, but not with faith beside.  
Such sweetness, then, my vocal spirit gave,  
That though Tolosan, I was called to Rome,  
The myrtle on my temples to assume.

Statius the people name me even still.  
Of Thebes I sang, of the great Achilles,  
And with the second fell, the Fates to please.  
The seeds of ardour were the sparks of fire  
Which warmed me, from that kindling flame divine,  
Whence thousand lamps with living lustre shine ;  
The *Æneid* is my theme—the breast I sucked,  
The nurse, the nurse, that soothed my murmuring song,  
Else I had faltered with an atom on.  
And to have lived at that inspiring time  
When Virgil lived, even of another sun  
More than I owe might annual course be run.”  
Turned Virgil to me, when he heard these words,  
With visage which, though silent, said, “Be mute !”  
But will is not with power entire endued.  
Laughter and tears pursue so much the trace  
The passion dictates that imprints them there,  
Nor follow will in natures most sincere.  
I only smiled, just as a man might wink ;  
The shade was silent, and regarded me  
In eyes, where most the count’nance you may see :  
“So to good issue may your labour come !”  
Said he. “Tell me why your count’nance but now  
Lightened with smile, that shone beneath your brow.”  
Now on the one and other part in strait,  
One to be silent bids, while one conjures  
That I should speak ; I sigh—the sound endures.  
“Speak !” said my master, “and be not afraid  
To tell him ! Speak, and do not give a nay  
To earnest wishes which his words convey.”  
Then I—“Perhaps you marvel at my smile ?

O antique spirit ! if 'twas so before,  
Will my announcement make you marvel more ?  
This person who conducts mine eyes on high,  
That Virgil is, the stream from which you bring,  
Perchance, the power of men and gods to sing.  
But if to other cause you trace my smile,  
Leave it as thing untrue, believe 't to be  
The words which late were spoke of him by thee."  
And now had he bent down t' embrace the feet  
Of my instructor ; but he said—" My brother !  
Do it not ! one 's a shade, so is other !"  
Rising, he said—" Now may you comprehend  
The o'erflowing love for thee that warms my breast,  
When I deny we are but shades at best,  
Treating a shadow like a solid thing."

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## CANTO XXII.

ALREADY had the following angel left,  
The angel who had led us to the sixth,  
And to my brow one scar the less affixed ;  
And they, whose thoughts on justice were intent,  
Had said, " Blessed ! " with exclamation loud,  
" I thirst ! " and nothing else but that 's allowed ;  
With lighter steps than through the other gyres  
My progress onward, of fatigue bereft,  
I followed footsteps of the spirits swift.  
When Virgil thus commenced—" The love inspired  
By virtue kindled, kindles other's heart,

If but an outward flame appears to start.  
Thus from the hour that he descended there,  
Juvenal, into infernal limbo's round,  
Affection spoke of which in thee was found,  
Benevolence to thee I felt so much  
More than for person that was never seen :  
So that the stairs have now far shorter been.  
But tell me—and pardon me as a friend,  
Should much security relax the rein,  
And with me now, as with a friend, speak plain—  
How could there be, within thy peaceful robe,  
Room for that avarice in so much sense,  
Which through thy diligence o'erflowed from thence ?”  
These words occasioned Statius first to smile,  
And as it went he afterwards replied :—  
“Each word of thine my heart has gratified ;  
And oftentimes, in truth, will things appear  
Which furnish false material to doubt,  
When the true causes have not yet come out.  
From your request, I see that you believe  
That I was avaricious in that life,  
Perhaps from circle where it mourns the chief.  
Now know, that avarice was far apart  
From me—too far, alas !—its counter-tones  
Have made me suffer for a thousand moons.  
And were it not that I directed care  
That place to understand where you upbraid  
The human nature you with pain surveyed.  
‘Why should'st thou not restrain accursèd thirst  
Of gold, the appetite of mortals lost ?’  
The fierce encounter of the rolling joist

I'd felt. And hands, I see, may open wide,  
Lavish, as well as they may hold too fast ;  
Of that likewise repenting at the last.  
How many shall arise shorn of their locks,  
Through ignorance of that to which they tend—  
Remorseless life and unrepenting end ?  
And know, that fault which lies to any sin  
Direct opposed with it, to wither hastes,  
And here with that its green luxuriance wastes :  
Therefore, if I am stationed in that class  
Who weep their avarice, to cleanse my thought  
For what is opposite it is my lot.”  
“But when you sang the cruel shock of arms  
The doubled sorrow of Giocasta made,”  
The poet of bucolic strains then said,  
“By that which Clio touches on with thee,  
It seems that faith had not your path pursued,  
Without the which avails not other good.  
If so, what sun, what candle had arisen,  
Illumed the dark, to show the course to take,  
The sails to follow in the Fisher's wake ?”  
And he to him—“'Twas thou that led me first  
To drink within Parnassus' grotto springs—  
The light to know my God thy guidance brings.  
You did like him who bears a lamp at night,  
Behind, which shows no objects that are near,  
But makes much wiser persons in the rear ;  
For when you said—‘New age begins to rise,  
Justice returns, the early human time,  
Comes a new progeny from heavenly clime,’—  
Poet by thee I was, and Christian grew.

The lines I draw, that you may know they're true,  
I'll stretch my hands to colour them anew.  
Now was the world impregnate with the seeds  
Of true belief, disseminated o'er  
By messengers of endless kingdom's power ;  
And thy word I touched on harmonising well  
With the new preachers and their fervent way,  
Made me revisit oft their company ;  
And soon they came so sacred to appear,  
That when Domitian persecuted sect,  
My tears ne'er learned their sorrows to neglect ;  
And while on earth sojourning by myself,  
I succoured them, and felt their laws direct  
Made me disparage every other sect.  
Ere yet I led the Grecians, in my song,  
To Thebes, I had received baptismal rite,  
For fear was Christian under cloud of night ;  
For long the paganism I showed above,  
And trod, for this lukewarmness little worth,  
More than four hundred years the circle fourth.  
And thou ! who raised the veil that thickened round,  
And hid so much of what I now behold,  
While aught remained of rising path untold,  
Tell me, where is Terence our antique,  
Cæcilius, Plautus, Varro, if you know ?  
Tell me, are they, and where, condemned or no ?"  
"They, Persius, and I, and several more,"  
Replied my leader, " with the Greek reside,  
Nursed by the Muses more than all beside.  
In the first compass of the prison dark  
Converse we often, on the mountain ground

Which keeps our nurses ever in its bound.  
I know Euripides, Anacreon,  
Simonides, and Agatho, and more  
Of Greeks, with laurel on their brows, of yore.  
Of thy race there are, there may they be seen,  
Antigone, Deiphile, Argia,  
And, sorrowful as ever, Ismena ;  
And her shalt thou see, who showed Langia ;  
Thetis, and the daughter of Tiresias,  
And, beside her sisters, Deidamia.”  
Silent already were the poets both,  
Anew intent to contemplate around,  
Free from ascent, and walls which hem the ground.  
The four handmaids already of the day  
Remained behind, the fifth was at the pole,  
Directing high its burning horn to goal,  
When my guide said—“ It will be well, I think,  
To bring right shoulders forward to outside,  
And round the mountain, as we’ve ever hied.”  
Thus usage our director new became,  
We took the way on less suspicious ground,  
That worthy soul a new companion found.  
They went before, and I, as wont, behind,  
Listening to them as they went along,  
And gained new knowledge in poetic song.  
But soon there broke upon their dear discourse,  
A tree that met us in the midst of road,  
Covered with apples which were sweet and good.  
As fir that lessens as it rises high  
From bough to bough, so to the ground grew this,  
Perchance lest any should attempt to rise.



Upon the side which closed the traveller's path,  
Fell from the lofty rock a liquor clear,  
Which o'er its branches spread, descending here.  
The poets two approached the showering tree,  
And a voice issued from its leafy wood :  
"Take care !—be chary when you taste this food !"  
And then it said—"Maria, she thought more  
Of nuptials honourable and complete,  
Than of her mouth you hear in answer greet.  
The ancient Romans of the water drank  
Content, and Daniel cared not for the meat ;  
Hungered for knowledge—food for him to eat.  
The earliest age of all was that of gold,  
When hunger made the showers of acorns good—  
Nectar in every brook that thirst pursued.  
Honey and locusts were the viands nursed  
The Baptist in the wilderness, his home ;  
And hence so great, so glorious to become,  
As opened by the Evangile to us."

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## CANTO XXIII.

ON the green leaves my eyes attentive rest,  
In manner such bird-catcher will survey,  
In chase of little birds life waste away.  
My more than father said to me—"My son,  
Come quick away, for now the moments press ;  
This lingering loss of time requires redress."



I turned my face, and footstep no less quick,  
To sages, whose discourse refreshes sense,  
And makes the journey one of no expense.  
And weeping, lo ! and blended with it song—  
“My lips, O Lord !” is what the ears retain,  
Which gave delight, and also brought forth pain.  
“My gentle father ! what is this I hear ?”  
Commenced I. “Shades,” said he, “perchance who go,  
And pay the debt of duty that they owe.”  
As travellers absorbed in thought will do,  
Who join upon the road a race unknown,  
Turning to them, continue to go on ;  
Behind us thus, but at a quicker pace,  
Came on and passed, and then would look about,  
A crowd of spirits, silent and devout,  
And in the eyes each hollow and obscure ;  
Pallid in face ; their form so very thin,  
The bones at once discovered through the skin.  
I do not think was so reduced in flesh  
Erisiton—the moisture all decayed  
By fasting long, and of still more afraid.  
I said within myself, reflecting thought,  
“The race behold who lost Jerusalem !  
And Mary’s son and famine’s tooth beseem.”  
Their eyes were only rings without the gems,  
Seemed but as O’s, their face, the M between—  
So lean and gaunt the M at once was seen.  
Who could have thought an apple’s smell alone  
Would govern so and generate desire ?—  
The scent of water such keen thirst inspire ?  
In wondering fixed at famine so extreme,

The cause, not manifest, I could not tell,  
Of meagre form and of regretful shell ;  
Lo ! from the depth profound of head, a shade  
His eyes turned on me, and retained his gaze,  
And cried aloud—" What is this wondrous grace ?"  
His face I never could have recognised,  
But the expression of his voice revealed  
That which his aspect had at first concealed :  
That little spark rekindled at the time  
All my experience of the features changed,  
And o'er Forese's face my eyesight ranged.  
" Alas ! contend not with this arid plague,  
Discolouring thus," he cried, " my withered skin !  
Nor with defect of flesh that coils me in.  
Tell me the truth of thee ; and who are they,  
The spirits two who come escorting thee,  
Not to remain while you converse with me ?"  
" That face I once lamented, when 'twas dead,  
Has no less sorrow caused and grief alarmed,"  
Replied I, " when I see it so transformed.  
But tell me, by God, who rends away thy leaves ?  
Bid me not speak while wonderstruck at this,  
For one preoccupied can ill express."  
And he—" From th' eternal counsel, virtue  
Upon the water and the plant comes down,  
And blends, and its attraction I must own.  
And all that race, lamenting here in song,  
Excessive gluttony who could pursue,  
Famine and thirst here purify anew :  
To drink, to eat, desire is still inflamed  
By odour from the apple, and the spray

Which o'er the verdure spreads, and finds its way.  
And not for once we circle round this space.  
We come to double and refresh our pain:  
Our pain?—I should have said, our solace gain.  
The will above conducts us to the tree,  
Which made Christ joyfully to say 'Eli !'—  
When with his vein he set his people free."  
And I to him—"Forese ! from the day  
In which you changed the world for better life,  
Five years have not completed all their strife.  
If power to sin was not extinct before  
The path of godly sorrow you had trod,  
Which once again espouses man to God,  
How have you here so high already come ?  
I thought that I should find thee far below,  
Where lapse of time for lapse of time will flow."  
And he to me—"So soon conducted here,  
To taste the gentler bitterness of woe,  
By all the tears from Nella's eyes that flow.  
Her prayers devout and sighs have drawn me from  
The coast, where expectation ever waits,  
And sent me past the other circle gates.  
So much the more beloved and prized by God,  
My widow, whom I held in life so dear,  
More singular as her good works might appear,  
Sardinia's Barbazia chaster far  
In women, and by far more free from sin,  
Than that Barbazia which I left her in.  
Oh, dear brother ! what shall I say to thee ?  
A future time is now within my view,  
To which the present hour will be but new,

When interdict will issue from the chair  
To Florence ladies of effrontery,  
With naked bosoms, where the paps you spy.  
Barbarians and Saracens were there e'er  
Forced to go covered, and their right mind in,  
By spiritual or other discipline ?  
Their future lot could but the shameless see,  
What the swift Heaven is bringing on its wing,  
To howl their mouths would soon be opening :  
For if my foresight do not err in this,  
Sorrow will come ere yet the cheek 's down—ah !  
Of babe that 's now consoled with "Nanna."  
Ah, brother ! see that you no more conceal :  
You see not I, but all the people here  
Now gaze in wonder where no rays appear."  
And hence I said—" If you recall to mind  
What once thou wert with me, and I with thee,  
'Twill sadden, sure, thy present memory.  
Know, from that life 'twas he conducted me,  
Who goes before me, some days since, when round  
That sister-light of him who shines was found."  
I showed the sun. 'Twas he, through night profound,  
Who led my footsteps through the real dead,  
And when this flesh as real followed.  
And hence it was his comforts drew me up,  
To round the mountain-side, and climb along,  
Who leads you right the world withdraws so long.  
He said as much he would accompany  
Me, till I was where Beatrice is found,  
And there must leave me, when we reach the ground.  
Virgilius is he who told me this,"

(I pointed to him;) “ he, the other shade,  
For whom each rocky ridge in tremor rung  
Within your kingdom, and gave out the song.”

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## CANTO XXIV.

OUR speech delayed not walk, nor that our speech,  
But travelling briskly on while we converse,  
As with fair wind the ships the waves disperse.  
The shades appearing now like things twice dead,  
Through caves of eyes with admiration rife,  
When they perceived that I was still in life.  
Continuing my speech, I thus went on,  
And said—“ His steps perhaps more slow, because  
He lingers, subject to another’s laws.  
But tell me if you know where ’s Piccarda,  
And if I look on any one of note  
Among the people, who my nature sought.”  
“ My sister, (that, ’twixt beautiful and good,  
I know not which the more) triumphant now  
In high Olympus, crowned with joyful brow.”  
First he said ; and—“ But here ’tis not forbid  
To mention each, since moisture so expressed  
From countenance, our arid cheeks attest.  
This,” and he pointed, “ is Buonagiunta—  
Buonagiunta da Lucca ; and this face  
Beyond it, which a keener edge betrays,  
Had holy church within the sway of hands.

He was from Tours ; in fasting chose to pine,  
His eels allaying with Vernaccian wine.  
And many more he named, and one by one,  
Pleased with their names, of umbrage not a spark,  
Nor low'ring discontent, nor gesture dark.  
I saw from hunger grind his teeth in vain,  
Ubaldin, from Pela Bonifazio,  
With pastoral staff that many held in awe ;  
I saw the noble Marquis who had space  
To drink at Ferli, and with less of drought,  
And quench that thirst which he perpetual thought.  
As one who looks will afterwards make more  
Of one than other, so I of Lucca,  
Who seemed to take the most account of me.  
There was a murmur, I know not—was it  
Gentucca ?—which I caught like whispering note,  
Where plague of justice lingers in the throat.  
“ O soul ! ” I said, “ that seem'st to wish to speak  
With me, make me to understand thy words,  
With all the satisfaction speech affords.”  
“ A woman 's born, not yet has bound her hair,  
Will cause that you,” said he, “ shall treat like friend  
My native city, that they reprehend.  
You will approach it with this prospect now.  
And should my whisper lead to error here,  
The events themselves ere long will make it clear.  
But say if truly now I see the man  
The new rhymes who brought in, began to prove—  
'Ladies, who have acquaintance made with love.' ”  
Replied I—“ I am one who, when Love breathes,  
Note down, and in his measure who can write,

His inmost words can signify aright."

"O brother!" said he, "but yet I see the knot  
Which holds Guitton the Notary, and me,  
From style where sweetness, novelty agree.  
Now well I see how stretch your sequent plumes,  
As your dictator prompts, in narrow tours,  
Which certainly is not the way with ours.  
And he who sets himself to pass the line,  
Sees not how far it is from style to style."  
And here, contented, silent grew and still.  
And as the birds that winter near the Nile  
Will form in column when they fly the while,  
More swiftly move, and then proceed in file ;  
Thus all the people who were passing there  
Their visage turned, accelerating still,  
Impelled by leanness and light-winged good-will.  
And as the man whom trotting has fatigued,  
Lets company go on, and walks his horse,  
Regains his breathing difficult from course ;  
Allowed Forese holy band to pass,  
And came behind me, and addressed me then—  
"How long till I behold thy face again?"  
"I know not," I replied, "how long I'll live :  
Return to world however soon I may,  
My wishes will anticipate the way ;  
Because the place to which my lot is fixed,  
From day to day disfurnished of all good,  
To ruin sad inclined, my grief renewed."  
"Now go," said he ; "I see the guilty one  
Drawn at the tail of flying furious beast,  
To vale from whence no sufferer is released.



At every pace that beast more swiftly goes,  
Increasing ever, till at last it strike,  
And leave the body but a shapeless wreck.  
They have not far to run, those wheels on high,  
(He raised his eyes to heaven,) till that appear  
My speech at present cannot render clear.  
Here you remain ; the time that flies is dear.  
This kingdom in, whereto we have attained,  
Too much is lost while footsteps are restrained.”  
So from the troop which gallops at its speed,  
Darts forth the cavalier to lead the track,  
And gain the honour of the first attack ;  
’Twas so he left us with his greater strides,  
And in the road with both of them I stay,  
Great marshals of the world, who led the way.  
And when in front of us so far he was,  
That sight his form no longer could attain,  
More than the mind what his expressions mean,  
Appeared before me, laden, lively boughs  
Of other apple : nor farther had we got,  
Before we turned to this, and reached the spot.  
I saw a race beneath it raise their hands,  
And cry, I know not what, towards the leaves ;  
As eager, trifling children one perceives,  
Who beg, and he they ask from answers not,  
T’ increase their want, make wishing more acute,  
Holds high the prize, and does not hide the fruit.  
At last they part, as if they were convinced.  
And we came up, to such a tree drew near,  
Refusing every prayer and every tear.  
“ Pass by beyond, without approaching here :



The tree is farther, of which Eve partook,  
And this fruit-laden plant from it was broke.”  
Thus, mid thick foliage, who I know not spoke,  
For Virgil, Statius, and myself alone  
Pursued the path that the ascent was on.  
“Remember,” next was said, “the accursed tribe,  
Formed from the clouds, who gorged themselves the best,  
To fight with Theseus with their double chest.  
And of the Hebrews who were found so soft,  
That Gideon was told to pass them by,  
When he rushed down on Madianites from high.”  
Thus with bent thighs along the border path  
We passed, and heard the fault of gluttony  
Followed by retribution’s bitter sigh.  
Enlarged again our solitary path  
More than a thousand paces yet beyond :  
In contemplation, either one was found.  
“Who are the three that walk in thought alone ?”  
Uttered a sudden voice, at which I shook,  
Like frightened sorry beast with fear o’ertook.  
My head I raised above to see who ’twas.  
In furnace never have I witnessed  
Metals or crystals so shining or so red,  
As at the time I looked on one, who said—  
“Here may you mount ; turn hither, if you please ;  
You go by this, who go in search of peace.”  
His aspect had bereft me of my sight,  
And made me turn to teachers in the rear,  
Like one proceeding only by the ear.  
As when the annunciator of the dawn,  
The breath of May, is moving with perfume,

Impregnate where the herbs and flowers have room,  
Such was the gale I felt upon mid-brow,  
Such was the waving plume that I could tell,  
And thence exhaling an ambrosial smell.  
And I perceived the words—"Blessed are they  
Enlightened so with grace, that appetite  
Can move a sober, moderate delight,  
Who hunger so far only as 'tis right."

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## CANTO XXV.

It was the hour which is not for the lame  
To climb : the sun had left meridian now  
To Taurus, and the night to Scorpio.  
And thence, as man who never makes a stop,  
But goes right on his way, through good or worse,  
If once necessity with spur transpierce ;  
Thus through the pass we entered one by one,  
Pressed forward on the steep ascent of path,  
Which parts the climber on its rugged wrath.  
And as the young stork 's seen to lift its wing,  
Through wish to fly, the summit cannot crown,  
Nor leave the nest where drops the fledged-bird down ;  
Thus kindled and extinguished was desire  
To ask, until at last the act I reach,  
Of him intending to indulge in speech.  
Prevented not my gentle sire, the speed  
We went at. "Shoot," he said, "your arrow well  
Which you have drawn, as far as to the steel."

Securely then my mouth I opened, said,  
“How is it one is subject to grow lean  
Where yet no want of nourishment has been?”  
“Had you remembered how Meleager  
Consumed and wasted with the wasting brand,  
This too you might arrive to understand.  
And had you thought how wrinkles on your brow  
To wrinkles answer in reflecting glass,  
That which seems hard would look like wrinkle’s trace.  
But to accommodate itself to thee  
In thought, here Statius is, whom I request  
To be physician to a troubled breast.”  
“Eternal prospect should my tongue unbind,”  
Statius replied, “e’en here, when thou art by,  
Let this excuse me—I could not deny.”  
Then he began : “If my expressions, son !  
Thy mind attentive marks, itself receives,  
They will illuminate the doubt it gives.  
The perfect blood, which never is imbibed  
By the full veins, remaining like the food  
From a full table, that has done its good,  
Takes an informing virtue from the heart,  
For all the human members it attains,  
To make them as it issued through the veins.  
Digested, then descends, where ’tis more fair  
To keep our silence than to speak, and drops  
Upon another’s blood, in organ stops.  
There encounter they the one and other,  
Passive the one, the other to enact,  
Through perfect place, the source to which ’tis tracked.  
And having joined, to operate begins,

Coagulating first, then vivifies  
That to whose substance it at first gave rise.  
Now animate, the active virtue there,  
Like that of plant—excepting this be found,  
That one is in the way, one touched its bound.  
So much it works, perceives itself to move,  
Like the sea-sponge ; to organise essays,  
From thence the powers which thus the seed conveys.  
Now it inclines, my son, and now distends,  
By virtue from the generating heart,  
Where future members nature can impart.  
But how the animal an infant grows,  
Thou see'st not yet ; for know, at this assault,  
Wiser than thee have found themselves at fault.  
By their own doctrine, they have thus disjoined  
From soul of man the intellectual powers,  
Because no organ for their use is ours.  
Open thy bosom to arriving truth,  
And know, that when 'tis once articulate,  
The brain of fœtus, and is thus complete,  
Then the First Mover turns to it with joy,  
O'er such a work of nature, and so meet,  
New spirit breathes with virtue that's replete ;  
And thus of it it makes a single soul,  
Which lives and feels, turns inward on the whole.  
And at the word that you may less admire—  
Regard the heat of sun, which makes the wine,  
Joined to the juice which percolates the vine.  
When Lachesis has no remaining thread,  
That being quits the flesh, and will untwine,  
And take the virtue human and divine.

The other faculties are like to mute,  
But memory, intelligence, and will  
In act acuter than if earthly still.  
Without remaining, by itself it falls  
Miraculously to a single strand,  
Discovers there the nature of its stand.  
As she her circumscribing place receives,  
Informing virtue radiates around,  
As far as in the living members found.  
And as the air, when it is full of dew,  
Reflecting foreign ray which has sojourned,  
With diverse colours shows itself adorned ;  
'Tis thus the air around will there put on  
The form suggested to it by the soul,  
Which then takes up its station virtual.  
And as the little flame attends the fire,  
Moves where it moves, and follows every change,  
The form can follow and the spirit range.  
And hence it afterwards assumes the look,  
Is called a soul ; each organ requisite  
It has, and feeling, even to the sight :  
Hence it is we speak, and hence we laugh,  
Hence our tears flow, and hence expand our sighs,  
Which o'er the mountain you have heard arise.  
Desires afflict us, and affections new,  
Which shape the figure of responsive shade,  
And this the reason of the marvel made."  
And now arrived we at the latest turn  
Which was before us ; to the right we turned,  
Attentive now to other care returned.  
Like bolt from cross-bow, bank discharges flame,

And the bright cornice sends a blast, on high  
Reflected, which sequesters passers-by.  
And therefore must we go by walled-up side,  
And one by one ; and here I feared the flame,  
And there the falling from the rocky frame.  
My teacher told me, " When you pass this way,  
Upon your eyes the leading rein keep tight ;  
A little doubting, and you err outright."  
" O God of tender mercy !" echoed round,  
From mighty flame it rose, and swelled in song,  
And more I thought to turn than to go on.  
I saw the spirits going through the flame ;  
Regarding them by turns, by turns my feet,  
Dividing gaze, which thus the pathway meet.  
Then, as the hymn was drawing to its close,  
They cried aloud, " I do not know a man !"  
And recommenced the strain in lower tone ;  
And ending it also, cried, " To the wood  
Diana ran ; Calisto hid her frame,  
Which now perceived the poison of love's flame."  
Returning thence to song, the ladies sang  
With lofty note, and husbands who were chaste,  
In virtue and in marriage who embraced.  
This measure was, I think, enough for them,  
Long as the flame enveloped all their forms.  
For such the care, such applications warm,  
They use to cure at last the wounds that harm.

## CANTO XXVI.

WHILE onward thus we walked from ledge to ledge,  
Oft my good master said—"I pray take care :  
Let it suffice, I've told thee to beware."  
The sun now struck above the shoulder right,  
And changed the blue, a whiter sky displays,  
And with my shade appeared the fire more red.  
At such a mark was many a shade inclined,  
When passing by, to bend attentive mind.  
This was the cause initiative that gave  
Tone to their speech and form to their address—  
" 'Tis not fictitious person," to express.  
Then towards me, far as they could, inclined  
Certain of them ; but yet with special note,  
To keep in fire, nor issue from its throat.  
" O thou that walkest, not to be more slow,  
From reverence, perhaps, to those before,  
Reply, for thirst and burning overpower !  
Not I alone thy answering require :  
All these are subject to a greater thirst  
Than India's, Ethiopia's plains have nursed.  
How is it that you make yourself a wall  
'Gainst the sun, thou that surely hast not yet  
Entered the ways of death's entangling net ? "  
So spoke one of them, and I had uttered.  
All, but attention fixed I, eager ken,  
Upon a novelty appearing then.  
For through the middle of the burning path

There came a race, encountering this from thence,  
Which made me stand in wonder and suspense.  
From every point I saw advance with haste,  
Each shadow come, and kissing one with one,  
No rest, but pleased with brief salutation.  
So when they enter through their brown array,  
With muzzles close, the little emmets go,  
Perhaps their fortune and their life to know.  
Scarce parted from this friendliest address,  
And the first footstep's tread was scarcely o'er,  
When each began loud clamour forth to pour—  
Of new race, "Sodoma and Gomorrah!"  
Another, "The cow entered Pasiphæ,  
That bull might run unto her luxury."  
Like cranes that to Riphæan mountains fly  
In part, and some to seek the arid sands,  
These shun the ice, and those the sunny lands;  
One hasteth to be gone, and other comes,  
Weeping they turn to songs they sang at first,  
And shouts more suited to their eager thirst.  
In crowds they gathered round me as before,  
The very same who had besought reply,  
With keen and listening aspect seemed to eye.  
Twice had I looked upon the wish expressed.  
"O souls!" I said, "however long declined,  
The peace you wish secure at last to find,  
My limbs, nor youthful nor mature, I left  
Far distant yonder, but with me they came,  
With all their blood and all their sinewy frame.  
My progress here, that I be no more blind.  
A lady, now above, acquired the grace,



Though mortal, thus that through your world I pace.  
So may your highest wish receive its fruit—  
That heaven may open wide its courts of bliss,  
Though full of love, to ampler space than this ;  
Tell me, so may it live upon my page,  
Who are you ?—what the nature of the crowd  
We saw, who came behind you and followed ? ”  
In no other guise, stupid and confused,  
The mountaineer stands mute, and at a loss,  
In city-bounds, so savage and so gross ;  
Such was the look of spirits to our eyes.  
Emerging from the stupor which had seized,  
In lofty breasts because 'tis soon appeased—  
“ O happy thou, along our limits bounds ! ”  
He recommenced who first addressed request,  
“ To live the better, in thy bark impressed ;  
The race that comes not with us has transgressed  
In that for which triumphant Cæsar heard  
The name of ‘ Queen,’ as salutation word ;  
Hence as they went the cry of ‘ Sodom ’ came,  
Themselves reproaching, and the burning shame,  
Such as you heard the accents which I name.  
Our sinning,” said they, “ was Hermaphrodite,  
And for that we transgressed the human law,  
And followed appetite of beasts we saw.  
To our opprobrium, as we left, we name  
That one by whom, for thus it is our cry,  
Was acted sin of bestiality.  
And now you know our doings, how we sinned.  
If haply you would know what are our names,  
The time denies, nor can I meet your claims.

Of myself, all that you desire I'll tell,  
I am Guido Guinicelli, who cleanse,  
Because repentant ere the last, my stains."  
Thus from Lycurgus, sorrow, when the two  
Rejoiced to see their mother's face once more ;  
Such was my joy, (but not like that, ran o'er,)  
When I heard him name himself my father—  
Father of better bards than me, who sang  
Till love's light lively rhymes in echo ran.  
Without or ear or tongue, in thought I went  
For lengthened time, with eyes upon his face ;  
Yet, for the fire, I kept a distant gaze.  
When I was satisfied beholding him,  
To serve him wholly I devoted mind,  
With that assurance to which none is blind.  
And he—" Th' impression that you leave is such  
By what you say, in me it is so clear,  
Through Lethe's waters shall not dim appear ;  
But since your words are sanctioned by an oath,  
Tell me the reason why you show me here,  
By word and look, that you account me dear ?"  
And I to him—" Those pleasant words of yours,  
Which, long as modern usage shall endure,  
Will kindness to their very ink insure."  
" My brother," said he, " this which I show thee  
With finger," and he showed a shade ere long,  
" Was better artist of the mother tongue :  
Verses of love, and prose works of romance,  
Surpassed them all ; and let the foolish say  
Limoges, bard precedes him in the way.  
The voices, more than truth, attract their gaze,

And thus they venture to make up their mind  
Ere art or reason 's to the cause inclined.  
Guittone was the cry among antique,  
From shout to shout to give to him the prize,  
Till truth, by many conquering, came to rise.  
And if that ample privilege be thine,  
That cloister it is free to enter, where  
Christ of the college abbot takes the care,  
Then but one Paternoster say for me,  
As requisite may be in world of ours,  
Where sin no longer exercises powers."  
And then, perchance to give another room  
Was pressing on, he vanished through the fire ;  
From fish in wave so flashes bright aspire.  
To him he showed, I moved a little on,  
Said, to my ears I wished his name would come,  
For which I fain would furnish grateful room.  
And he began with freedom then to say—  
"So wins upon me your courteous demand,  
That I to hide myself cannot command.  
Arnault am I : lament I in canzon,  
Through shallow of the fire I go, and see  
The day I hope for shining beauteously.  
I pray you by what leads you, that valour  
To top of scale which guideth you unto,  
At every time remember you my woe."  
Himself then closes in refiner's fire.

## CANTO XXVII.

As when the early rays are vibrating,  
There where their Maker once poured out his blood,  
When 'neath the Libra falls the Ebro's flood,  
And when the Ganges with the noonday burns ;  
So stood the sun, and hence the day declined.  
God's angel, lo ! exhilarates the mind :  
Beyond the flame, he said, upon the brink—  
"Oh, blessed are the pure in heart !"  
In livelier accents than our tongues impart.  
And afterwards—"Advance not till the fire  
Pierce you, ye holy souls ; but enter there,  
And list the song from hence that issues clear,"—  
He said, when now we had approached the place.  
And such the feeling the perception gave,  
I felt like one already in the grave.  
With hands together joined, I stretched myself ;  
Regarding fire, imagination names  
The forms once seen committed to the flames.  
Towards me then my gentle escorts turned,  
And Virgil said—"My son, fear not for breath ;  
There may be torment here, but never death.  
Remember—recollect thee ; for if I  
Upon Geryon guided thee aright,  
Now are we nearer to the Source of light.  
And sure I am, that if within the womb  
Of this same flame a thousand years you were,  
You would not then have lost a single hair.

And if you think that I deceive you now,  
Approach to that from which you keep aloof,  
And with the hem of garment make the proof.  
Lay now," he said—"lay every fear aside :  
Turn hither, then, securer than before."  
Though conscience-struck, yet I advanced not more.  
When he perceived that I was firm and hard,  
A little moved, he said—"My son, you see  
This wall's betwixt Beatrice and thee."  
As, at the name of Thisbe, Pyramus  
Once more raised up the eyes already weighed,  
What time the mulberry grew vermilion red,  
'Twas thus the hardness of my heart grew soft.  
My guide I turned to, when I heard the name  
That thrills and springs for ever in my frame ;  
And hence he shook his brow, and said—"How now ?  
Why do we linger here ?" And then he smiled,  
As when the apple has o'ercome the child.  
Before me then he entered into fire,  
And begged that Statius would advance behind,  
Who for long way our steps had intertwined.  
When once I was within, I could have turned,  
Refreshed, to where the boiling crystal burned ;  
Such was the fire all computation spurned.  
To comfort me, my gentle father spoke :  
Discourse of Beatrice the way supplies ;  
"Even now," he said, "I seem to see her eyes."  
A voice was heard, that guided us and sang,  
Beyond the spot : attentive on we hied,  
And came without, where climbing path we spied.  
"Come, ye blessed of my father !" the sounds

That issued forth from light that was within,  
Bright and overpowering to surpassing.  
“The sun is going,” added—“evening comes ;  
Delay not now, till all the way is past,  
Ere darkness yet has veiled the clouding west.”  
Upright our way within th’ imbedding rock,  
In such direction, that before us fled  
The rays of sun, now sunk to lowly bed.  
Not many steps had we essayed to pass,  
When the spent shadow showed the sun had set  
Behind us, and the gathering darkness met.  
Ere yet th’ horizon, o’er its track immense,  
Had made one aspect of the boundless space,  
And night dispensed its every darker grace,  
Each one of us had made the step a bed.  
The nature of the mount disfranchised power,  
More than delight to climb its spiral tower.  
The wild-goats thus lie down to chew the cud,  
That lately wantoned rapid on the brink,  
Ere their rock dinner and their mountain drink ;  
Still as the shade, while yet the sun is hot,  
While shepherd gazes as he leans on crook,  
And, leaning, watches with a careful look ;  
And as the swain, whose lodging is without,  
Close by his flock remains the quiet night,  
To watch lest wild beast scatter and affright ;  
So all the three were lodged upon the steps :  
I was a goat, and they like shepherds look,  
Bound here and there upon the living rock.  
’Twas little of the expanse that I could see ;  
But by that little I beheld each star

Clearer and greater than they often are.  
While ruminating and admiring there,  
Sleep came on me ; and oft can it reveal  
The message, ere it come, of future weal.  
'Twas in that hour, I think, when from the east  
First Cytherea to the mount returns,  
That star that ever with love's radiance burns,  
Youthful and fair, appeared in dream to me  
A lady, seen to pass along a plain,  
Collecting flowers ; and then she sang in strain :—  
“ Know thou, whoe'er thou art would know my name,  
That I am Leah, moving thus o'er land  
With my own fair hands, to make me garland  
To please me—at the mirror here adorn.  
My sister Rachel never quits her glass,  
And sits before it while the bright hours pass ;  
Delighted to behold her lovely eyes,  
As I, t' adorn me, with my hands to twine :  
To gaze her pleasure, and to labour mine.”  
The early splendours of the coming dawn  
To pilgrim all the more delightful rise,  
As homeward less and less the distance lies.  
The darkness fled away on every side ;  
I rose, for sleep had fled with twilight season,  
And the grand masters were already risen.  
“ That pleasant apple, through so many boughs  
The eager zeal of mortals ever seeks,  
To-day will pacify your famished cheeks.”  
Such the expressions that Virgilius used ;  
And never strains, though they might please me much,  
To me gave equal pleasure as did such.

Wish upon wish my eager breast inspires  
Upward to mount, each footstep nearer brings,  
And buoyant ardour but expands my wings.  
And now the rocky stair was all o'erpast,  
Upon the topmost step our feet were spread ;  
And Virgil fixed his eye on me, and said :—  
“ The temporal and the eternal fire  
Thou hast beheld, my son ! and reached the bourne,  
Where, of myself, no farther I discern.  
I've led thee here with genius and with art :  
Thy pleasure guide the way, no climbing wait ;  
The steep you've conquered, now o'ercome the straight.  
Behold ! the sun relumes thy brow in front :  
Behold ! the herbs, and flowers, and little trees,  
Which of itself that land pours forth at ease.  
Until with joy they come, the beauteous eyes,  
Which, weeping, caused me to approach to thee,  
You may sit down or wander easily ;  
Nor longer word or sign expect from me.  
More free, direct discreetly, at thy choice,  
Henceforth 'twere folly to distrust its voice ;  
With crown and mitre, which I give, rejoice.”

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## CANTO XXVIII.

To wander through, around the forest, where  
Diviner boughs with living foliage rise,  
Whose shades the day attempered to our eyes,  
Without more waiting I abandoned bank ;



Along the plain with easy step pursued  
My path, where every side the sweets renewed.  
A gentle breeze, that never closed its wing,  
With all its freshness struck upon my brow,  
Not with more force than zephyr's softest blow,  
Through which the trembling leaves with murmur bent  
Where falls the shadow of the sacred mount ;  
Nor yet so far disturbed, moved to and fro,  
To make the little birds, on topmost part,  
Forget to execute their finished art,  
But with full joy they sang the hours of prime ;  
While, as they sang, replied the murmuring sprays,  
And moved responsive to their joyous lays :  
Such as from branch to branch is gathering, where,  
Through the pine forest on Chiassi's shore,  
Scirocco sweeps from out its cavern hoar.  
My easy steps had yet advanced so far  
Within that aged wood, I could not mark  
The point I entered first the foliage dark ;  
And lo ! a rivulet restrained my steps,  
That on the left, with its o'erflowing stream,  
Spread out the herbs that on its margin gleam.  
The purest and the clearest of our streams  
Would soon reveal the touch of mixture there,  
By that whose waters are for ever fair ;  
And yet all brown it moves beneath the shades  
Perpetual, which its modest surface crown,  
That never suffer ray of sun nor moon.  
With feet arrested, but with wandering eyes,  
I travelled o'er its current, to survey  
The freshened bloom of every flower of May.

Appeared at once, as often will appear,  
What on a sudden wonder's self disturbs,  
And every thought, except its own, absorbs—  
A lady, by herself that still went on,  
Singing, and gathering as she went the flowers  
With which was painted all her pathway tours.  
“ Ah, lady fair ! that with the rays of love  
Art warmed, if rightly I can read thy face,  
Wherein the heart itself the most betrays,  
Come, if you please, to turn you hitherward,”  
Said I to her, “ this river bank along,  
Until I understand the theme of song.  
You make me remember one like thee, who  
Was roving thus, when Proserpine wandering,  
Her mother lost her child, and she the spring.”  
As turns a lady, with her pointed soles  
To earth, within her vesture in the dance,  
And imperceptibly her feet advance,  
Thus o'er the red and yellow flowers she turned  
To me, and seemed, I thought, not otherwise  
Than maiden who casts down her modest eyes.  
According gently to my prayers, she came  
So near me, that I heard the dulcet strain,  
And knew the meaning that the notes contain.  
Whene'er she touched the place whereon the grass  
Was bathed with waters of the lovely stream,  
She raised her eyes in token of esteem.  
I do not think that splendour ever beamed  
Like that beneath the lid of Venus' eye,  
Whose son had pierced her with his deepest sigh.  
She smiled from off the bank right opposite

Twined with her hands the variegated flowers,  
Which that high land without the seedling pours.  
Three paces only was the space between,  
But yet the Hellespont, which Xerxes passed,  
(A bridle still o'er man's presumption cast,)  
Was not more odious in Leander's eyes,  
Rolled ceaseless 'twixt Sestos and Abydos,  
Than that whose narrower streams divide us.  
"You are strangers : perhaps, because I smile,"  
Began she, "in appointed place of rest,  
For human nature its peculiar nest,  
Suspicion in your wonder you retain.  
'Thou, Lord ! hast made me glad,' will make it clear,  
And chase the shadows of encroaching fear.  
And thou in front, who madest request to me,  
Would you hear aught beside, I'm ready now  
To answer question that perplexes you."  
"The water," said I, "and the forest sound,  
Are combating within, like new belief  
Opposing faith, and meet with no relief."  
Whence she answered—"I will tell the cause,  
And how the thing proceeds which you admire,  
And purge the cloud that hangs a little higher.  
The Highest Good, who in himself delights,  
Created good for good, and gave this place  
To man, and sealed it for perpetual peace,  
Who sojourned, for his sin, but little here—  
To trouble and to sorrow changed the smile,  
The harmless laughter and the playful wile.  
That no damp vapours which exhale below  
From earth, or water, heat that rarefies,

And in proportion makes the vapours rise,  
Might war with man, and hurt his chosen place,  
Arose this mountain up to heaven so far,  
And freed from storms which might its beauty mar.  
And now, because in circuit just so far  
The air is circling with the billow o'er,  
If stopped by no projecting butt or coign,  
Upon this height, which all around is free  
To ingress of the air, such motions strike,  
And make the wood resound, because 'tis thick.  
And so much can the stricken plant effect,  
That with its virtue it impregnates air,  
And that, travelling, spreads it everywhere.  
And other land proportioned to its worth,  
Or of itself, or of its heaven, conceives,  
Daughter of diverse virtue, diverse leaves.  
No longer, then, a wonder will appear  
The strange report that any plant could grow,  
And seedless, yet attach to earth below.  
And know, besides, that all the sacred plain  
With each prolific kind of nature's dense—  
In 'tself bears fruit, but not dissevered hence.  
The water which you see did not arise  
From vein restored by vapours checked by frost,  
As stream full breathed, and then whose breathing's lost ;  
But issues from a fountain solid, pure ;  
Which from the will of God's again supplied  
With what's expended upon either side :  
Descends with virtue here, to take away  
The memory of every sin that 's past ;  
And there to make the better memory last.

On this side Lethe, and on other side  
Eunoe it is called : of virtue void,  
Unless both here and there the taste be tried—  
And every other taste that taste excels.  
It may be that your thirst is satisfied  
Without I utter more, and want supplied ;  
But for good-will one corollary more :  
Nor think I you'll account my speech less dear,  
Better than promise to expatiate here.  
The poet's song, and they who echo praise  
Of golden age, and of the happy state,  
In their Parnassus, this might indicate.  
Here innocent at first the human root ;  
Here spring for ever, universal fruit ;  
The nectar this that every taste can suit.”  
I turned me to the rear, to look around  
Towards my poets—saw that smile arose  
To hear the voice, and then its final close :  
To lady beautiful I turned my sight.

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## CANTO XXIX.

ENAMOURED lady thus might go, and sing ;  
Continually the burden of her word,  
“Blessed are they whose sins are covered.”  
Onward her motion, like the wood-nymphs light,  
Who ramble through the woodland shades at noon ;  
One fain would fly, and one would see the sun.

Against the stream and o'er the bank she went,  
With little footsteps ; I, with equal pace,  
The little footsteps with the little trace.  
Between us not a hundred paces were,  
Where rose and fell the bank with equal bend ;  
And to the east my footsteps also tend.  
Nor had we rambled far upon the way,  
Her figure when she turned to me entire,  
And said—" Regard ! my brother, now, and hear."  
And, lo ! a sudden lustre passed across  
Through all parts of the mighty forest there,  
Such that it seemed like lightning in the air ;  
But as the lightning lasts but with the flash,  
And this endured, more brilliant than before,  
In thought I said—" What is this new splendour ?"  
And sweet the melody that ran through air.  
So luminous a sight, that made me feel  
Eve's bold transgression with sufficient zeal,  
That she, when both the heaven and earth obeyed,  
Formed for a day, the pressure of the seal,  
And woman only could endure no veil ;  
Beneath the which had she but been devout,  
Ineffable delights had been my lot,  
At first, and long ere they could be forgot.  
And while I travelled through the primal sweets,  
And over everlasting pleasure hung,  
And more of joy desirous to prolong,  
Before us gleamed as 'twere a kindled fire,  
In air already 'neath the bright green boughs ;  
And the sweet sound of songs was heard for noise.  
O sacred virgins ! all is dear for you ;

Hunger, and cold, and watching I endure—  
Occasion calls for guerdon you procure.  
It is that Helicon should through me run :  
Aid me, Urania ! with thy lofty choir ;  
The things surpassing thought in verse inspire.  
A little more beyond, seven trees of gold  
Apparent by the distance were unrolled,  
And false, in lengthened space, their forms unfold.  
But when I was so near their outward shape,  
That object which obstructing lights betray,  
Lost not from distance e'en a single trait.  
The virtue that to reason brings discourse,  
Unveiled the candelabras at my side ;  
The singing voices all " Hosanna !" cried.  
Above them flamed their armour beautiful,  
More clear by far than moon in the serene,  
At midnight hour, in her first quarter seen.  
I turned myself with admiration full  
To good Virgilius ; me he did address  
With countenance charged with wonder not the less.  
I turned my aspect to the lofty things  
That moved so slowly on the way to us  
The nuptial days would seem to linger less.  
The lady called to me—" And wherefore burn  
So for those living lights till almost blind,  
And not regard the ones who come behind ?"  
I looked, and at the time beheld a race  
Approaching near, who all were clothed in white,  
And such as ne'er before were seen in light.  
Splendid the water on the left, the tide  
Returned the image of my left-hand side,



Whene'er I looked, as on a mirror wide.  
When from my bank I had so fair a post  
That all the distance was the river space,  
To have a better view my footstep stays,  
And saw the flames, in their advancing course,  
Relinquish air, all painted in their train,  
Of standards waved, the image to retain,  
That stood distinctly, colours over head.  
The seven listed with whose radiant flash,  
The sun makes bow, and Delia makes her sash.  
Their banners in the rear, outreaching high,  
Ten paces were they all beyond my sight,  
Such was the distance that they stretched outright.  
Beneath so fair a sky as I have drawn  
Came four-and-twenty elders, two and two,  
With crowns of fleur-de-lis upon their brow.  
All sang and said at once — "Blessed art thou !  
And, among Adam's daughters, blessed be  
For ever ! single in simplicity !"  
And when the flowerets and the freshened herbs  
Upon the other bank, opposed to me,  
Were free from impress of th' elected race,  
As light in heaven is seen to second light,  
Came four animals, the eye perceives,  
And crowned each animal with verdant leaves.  
With six wings every beast was plumed and clad,  
The wings were full of eyes, with which might vie,  
If they had life, each dazzling Argus eye.  
Their forms to picture, reader ! were t' enlarge  
My rhymes, which other subjects now surprise,  
So that to this I cannot turn my eyes.



But read Ezekiel, who delineates these,  
As he beheld them from the northern clime,  
With cloud, and fire, and whirlwind advancing ;  
And such as you shall find them in his roll,  
Such were they here, excepting in each wing,  
Where John with me from him is differing.  
The space within these four, a chariot  
Contained triumphal, on two wheels sustained,  
To gryphon's neck attached, and thus retained ;  
And this extended one, and other wing,  
'Twixt centre ; and the colours, three and three,  
So that their sweep was without injury.  
So high they mounted, that they were not seen.  
His members were of gold, as far as bird ;  
And white the others, with vermilion stirred.  
Not even Rome, with chariot so fine,  
E'er cheered Augustus', Africanus' sight,  
Compared were poor the chariot of light—  
That lost chariot, which, declining, burned  
At prayer of the alarmed, devoted Earth,  
When secret Justice took a sudden birth.  
And ladies three, advancing on right wheel,  
Came dancing on, and one so bright and red,  
From fire scarcely to be distinguished ;  
The other was as if the flesh and bones  
Had been of emerald ; and the third to know,  
The fairest texture of the new-blown snow.  
And now of white they all appeared compact,  
And now of red ; and from one song enow  
The rest took up the measure, quick or slow.  
Upon the left, four festal figures beamed,

Attired in purple ; followed as she led,  
The first, who had three eyes within her head.  
And close to all the knot where they were grouped,  
I saw two old men, differing in their dress,  
Honour alike, and gravity express.  
The one betrayed some counsellor or friend  
Of high Hippocrates, whom nature made  
To bring to animals their dearest aid.  
The other showed an all-opposing care,  
Armed with a sword both glittering and sharp,  
The distance nor the water could not warp.  
Of humble seeming then beheld I four ;  
Behind them all an aged man alone  
Advance, though sleeping, yet a shrewdlike one.  
These seven in vesture like the first were clad ;  
But not, like them, in beauteous wreaths arose  
The lily's garland on their festal brows—  
Rather with roses and vermilion flowers.  
A little distance off, you could have sworn  
They were on fire, above their eyebrows burn.  
Against me, when the chariot made a stop,  
A thunder sounded, and that noble race  
Had heard the interdict of farther space,  
Came to a halt, their foremost ensigns fixed.

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## CANTO XXX.

IN the first heaven, when, as the polar star,  
Which never knew its rise nor setting hour,

Nor other cloud but what o'er sin must lower,  
In duty there, which made each one alert,  
Just as the lower sign will point resort,  
And guide the pilot till he reach the port,  
Was firmly fixed ; 'twas then the faithful band  
Who came 'twixt Gryphon and his brighter rays,  
Turned to the car as to their proper place.  
And one of those, with message from above—  
“ Come, spouse ! from Lebanon,” the strain he cried,  
Thrice he repeated, and the rest replied.  
As when the blest, who hear the trumpet sound,  
Arise at once each one from cavern deep,  
Lift the new fleshly vesture from its sleep,  
So from the sacred chariot arose  
A hundred others at the elder's voice,  
Heralds and servants of eternal choice,  
Pronouncing, “ Blessed art thou who comest !  
Around, above, O scatter flowers like this !  
*Manibus O date lilia plenis.*”  
I've seen before, in the beginning day,  
The eastern quarter all a roseate scene,  
The sky, besides, a beautiful serene ;  
And the sun rising, with his face in clouds,  
So that the vapours tempered all his rays,  
And for a space the eye sustains the gaze.  
'Twas thus enveloped in a cloud of flowers  
That issued from the wave of angel hands,  
And showering fell beyond where chariot stands.  
Beneath white veil, with peaceful olive wreath,  
Appeared a lady, under mantle green,  
In colour robed of living flame, was seen.

My spirit then, which had so long been mute,  
Though in her presence all unconscious yet,  
Nor felt the shudder nor the trembling fit—  
Nor had my eyes more knowledge of her form—  
Through hidden virtue that came out from her,  
Perceived the might of ancient love to stir.  
No sooner had the influence struck my sight,  
Of lofty virtue, I had felt so rife  
When first beyond my boyish years of life,  
I turned me to the left-hand side, intent,  
Like little infant running to mamma,  
When once attacked by fear or filled with awe,  
To say to Virgil, “There is not one drop  
Of blood within me trembling but became :  
I know the tokens of the ancient flame.”  
But Virgil had deprived me of himself ;  
Virgil, my dearest father, left me lone ;  
Virgil, my shelter and my safety, gone !  
Not all our ancient mother lost availed  
To wash from off my cheeks the falling dew,  
But weeping tears sufficed to blot anew.  
“Dante ! since Virgil has departed now,  
Weep not for him ; as yet you need not weep :  
It needs another sword to pierce thy sleep.”  
Like admiral on poop, or at the prow,  
Who comes to view the seamen of the fleet,  
To make their duty and their tasks complete ;  
Upon the left side of the chariot  
(’Twas thus she turned me, when she spoke my name,  
Which here I register, compelled to same,)  
I saw the lady who at first appeared,

Beheld beneath angelic festival,  
Direct her eyes across the river's fall  
To me, so far as veil from off her head,  
Encircled with Minerva's olive wreath,  
Allowed the face to be disclosed beneath.  
Regal in gesture, with insulting look  
Continued, so as one who speaks behest,  
But yet reserves the bitterest for the last.  
"Mark me well ; look well. I am Beatrice !  
How hast thou deigned the mountain to draw near ?  
And know you not that man is happy here ?"  
My eyes had fallen upon the crystal font,  
But seeing there myself, I looked to grass—  
With cloud of shame my brow engraven was.  
So to the son the mother looks superb,  
As she appeared to me the bitter herb  
Of deep regret, the pity to absorb.  
She held her peace, and then the angels sang,  
Sudden, "In thee, O Lord ! I've put my trust."  
Advanced no more than to where "My feet thou'st."  
As snow upon the living timber lies,  
And on the back of Italy congeals,  
Blown up and spread out which Sclavonian feels,  
Then liquified, entirely melts away,  
Soon as the land that knows no shadow breathes,  
And, like a candle at the fire, unwreathes ;  
And so bereft was I of sighs and tears  
Until their song began, whose faithful ears  
Receive—retain the music of the spheres.  
But when I heard and marked the varying tone  
That touched with pity, more than words expressed,

Which said, " Virgin ! why thus disturb his rest ? "  
The ice which was congealed around my heart,  
To spirit and to water turned, expressed  
Through mouth and eyes with anguish, left my breast.  
Still was she poised on the right edge of car,  
And thus bespoke the essences divine :  
" You keep your watch in everlasting day,  
So that nor night nor sleep can snatch for aye  
One step from ages as they glide away.  
Hence is my answer with the greater care,  
That he may know it who stands weeping there,  
That fault and pain may have an equal share.  
Not only from the grand revolving wheels,  
Directing every seed to find an end,  
Even as the stars their influence lend ;  
But through the heavenly graces that o'erflow,  
And rain from vapours which are hid so high,  
That baffle all the gaze of mortal eye,  
This man was such, in his new being found,  
Of virtuous kind, that every nobler way  
In him gave proof of wonderful essay ;  
So much the more malignant, wild the soil  
Of earth with evil seed, untilled with toil,  
The more good vigour and terrestrial oil.  
A little while, supported with my look,  
I showed my youthful eyes to lead him right,  
Conducted him with me, and led to light.  
Scarce had I touched the ground of second state,  
And changed my nature to another life,  
When he forsook and changed his first belief.  
When from the flesh to spirit I was raised,

When beauty, virtue, found a new increase,  
His love and favour sought a swift release.  
He turned his footsteps to a way untrue,  
Followed the falser images of good,  
Where promised fruit for ever is pursued.  
And naught availed that inspiration power  
With which at night, in dreams or otherways,  
I urged recall—so little counsel stays.  
So far he fell, that every argument  
Of safety fell too short his soul to raise,  
Except, at last, to show the ruined race.  
For this I visited the gate of death :  
And he who led him hither up so high  
Received my weeping prayers, and heard my sigh.  
Heaven's high decree had sure been broken now,  
If Lethe he had passed, and tasted hence  
Such food as this without the least expense  
Of penitential tears, to weep offence."

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## CANTO XXXI.

"O THOU ! who art beyond the sacred stream,"  
Turning the point of speech for me to carp,  
Whose edge, before, I felt was keen and sharp,  
She recommenced without delay her strain—  
"Tell me if this be true ; for such a charge  
Requires confession that 's both prompt and large."  
My faculties were so confused at this,  
The voice came out and spent itself, before

The organs that unfold it could restore.  
A little suffered, then, and, "What think you?"  
She replied. "In thee, the memory's regret  
The wave has not obliterated yet."  
Terror, confusion too, together blend,  
And made so sad a "Yes" forsake my mouth,  
It wanted vision to attest its truth.  
As breaks a cross-bow that is over bent—  
When cord or bow is stretched beyond its wont,  
The slow-winged bolt will scarcely touch the point,  
Out burst my tears against the heavy weight,  
For there came gushing out both tears and sighs,  
And the voice slackened as its sorrows rise.  
And she to me—"When moved by my desires,  
Which once conducted thee to love the good,  
And showed how much, how far, to be pursued ;  
What fosse traversed, what intercepting chain,  
Preventing thy advance, thy purpose stops,  
To make thee part with all thy heavenward hopes ?  
And then, what easy lure, what hopeful signs,  
Appeared encouraging on others' brows,  
To lead thee on beyond where right allows ?"  
After I had drawn a long, bitter sigh,  
Scarce had I voice to utter a reply,  
And my lips faintly formed a weeping cry—  
"Things present, with their false deceitful show,  
Soon as the sight of thee to me denied,  
Turned my weak footsteps to the other side."  
And she—"Had you been silent, or denied  
That you confessed, still had your fault been shown,  
And still thy sin the eye of judge must own ;



But when distilling down its native cheek,  
The accusing sin appears, within our court  
The wheel declines the vengeance, and turns short.  
But yet, that shame may bring some good from ill,  
And Syren's voice may not entangle still,  
Remove the cause of germinating tears,  
And listen how to far opposing line  
My buried reliques might your heart incline.  
Nature nor art could show a form like that,  
So pleasing, like the members that enclosed  
The frame that now in dust has long reposed.  
Of highest pleasure, then, if thus bereft  
By my decease, what mortal thing should e'er  
Beguile thee after for such lure to care ?  
Well might you, when you felt the early dart  
Of things fallacious, when I soared on high,  
Prepare to follow through a nobler sky ;  
Nor once allow the wings to droop again  
For farther blows, or for a little maid,  
Or other vanity, again betrayed.  
The new-fledged bird may wait, or twice or thrice,  
But, when full-fledged, in vain the net is spread—  
In vain the arrow of the fowler's sped."  
As little boys, that stand ashamed and mute,  
With eyes bent to the earth, then turn and hear,  
Confess their fault with penitence sincere,  
So stood I ; and she said—" If but to hear  
Is painful, lift thy beard to look again,  
And mark how sight will give thee greater pain."  
With less reluctance is the holm upwrenched,  
Which yields at length before the northern blast,

Or that which swept Iarbas' land the last,  
Than I at her commandment raised my chin :  
When by the beard she signified the face,  
I well perceived the poison in the case.  
And as my face was lifted up to see,  
These early creatures from their sprinkling cease,  
My eye beheld when once it had release.  
These lights beheld, although scarce steady yet,  
Saw Beatrice directed to the place  
Where the two natures sojourned in one space.  
Though veiled, the blooming river-bank beyond,  
She seemed herself surpassing now at last,  
Far as she once the rest on earth surpassed.  
Repentant stings their sharpest goads infixed,  
And each thing once lovely, now but the more  
Was inimical as beloved before.  
So conscious was I, that it smote my heart—  
Vanquished I fell ; and what my state then was  
She knows full well who was herself the cause.  
But after, when the heart sent back my strength,  
The lady, whom at first I found alone,  
Said over me—" Hold—let me not alone !"  
Into the river drew me to the neck—  
Drew me behind her, o'er the wave to bound  
Light as the shuttle in the weaver's hand.  
When I drew nearer to the blessed shore,  
" Wash me !" was heard so sweetly float around,  
That I can not remember e'en the sound.  
The lady fair within her open arms  
My head embraced, and then she me submerged,  
Where all the water o'er me might be urged :

She took me up, presented me, all laved,  
Within the dance the four fair ladies made,  
That with their arms each lady might o'ershade.  
"Nymphs are we here, and in the heaven are stars.  
Ere Beatrice descended to the world,  
We were her handmaids : office such unfurled.  
We will lead thee to her eyes ; but their glad  
Lights ask livelier eyesight to admire,  
Yon three to search, and with a deeper fire."  
'Twas thus that, singing, they began to lead  
Me toward the region of the Gryphon's breast,  
Where stood the form of Beatrice confest.  
"Let not thine eye," they said, "decline the sight :  
Thee we have placed the emeralds before,  
From whence the arms of love came out of yore."  
Thousand desires, more ardent than the flame,  
Enchained my own to her resplendent eyes,  
Still fixed upon the Gryphon motionless :  
Like as the mirror in the sun, 'twas thus  
The double creature wild came forth within—  
Now in one semblance, now in other seen.  
Think, reader ! if I marvelled when I saw  
A thing like that, which seemed to be unmoved,  
And yet such changes in its image proved.  
While full of wonder thus, and full of joy,  
My soul was tasting this delightful food,  
Which never satiates, and is still pursued ;  
Themselves demonstrating of loftier line  
In gestures, came the other three before,  
And sang responsive to th' angelic choir.  
"Turn, Beatrice ! turn thy saintly eyes,"

This was their song, "to him thy faithful one,  
To see thee who has wandered far and lone :  
For grace's sake, be gracious ! and unveil  
To him thy mouth, and let thy hand reveal  
The second beauty which you now conceal."  
Splendour of living and eternal light !  
What student, pale beneath Parnassus' brows,  
Or where some cistern with its waters flows,  
Who would not feel embarrassed, stand in awe,  
If he should try to paint thy semblance there,  
When heaven harmonious shaded one so fair,  
And then thy beauty bloomed in open air ?

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## CANTO XXXII.

So fixed and so attentive were my eyes  
To quench the longing of the ten years' thirst,  
No other senses from their silence burst :  
From here to there, preparing for neglect,  
For heedless thought ; so much the saintly smile  
Had drawn attention in its antique toil :  
When forcibly my sight was turned to left  
By these, the sacred virgins. With amaze,  
I heard a voice that said—"Too fixed a gaze !"  
My sight was so disposed awhile, as if  
Within those eyes too bright a sun had smote,  
And scarcely can the sight its view denote :  
But when, now reinforced, a little strong—

I say a little, from respect to much  
Of sensible, which felt of force the touch—  
I saw upon their right wing turn and wheel  
The glorious army; at this movement on't,  
The sun and sevenfold lustres in their front.  
Beneath the guard of bucklers as a band  
Will move with-ensign, march in ranks around,  
Before the whole can interchange their ground ;  
Such the militia of celestial realm,  
And so proceeded on and passed, ere team  
Of chariot passed the border of the beam.  
Then to the wheels the ladies turned their steps,  
And Gryphon moved with blessed burden on,  
So that of all the feathers stirred not one.  
The lady fair who drew me through the way,  
And Statius, and I, pursued the bend of wheel,  
Whose moves an orb of lesser arch reveal.  
Thus passed we through the lofty forest, void,  
(From fault of her on whom the serpent wrought,)  
My paces tempered with angelic note.  
Three arrow-flights, perhaps, and just as far,  
Unfettered might have flown as we had moved,  
When Beatrice, descending downward, proved.  
I heard them murmur all now, "Adam!"  
And then they sought a plant, despoiled and bare  
Of flowers and leaves on all its branches there :  
The foliage spreading far and wide on high,  
Extended so, that Indian would have gazed,  
Even in his woods, so loftily upraised.  
"Gryphon ! be blest, who never rent a bough  
With beak from off the tree so sweet to taste,

From whence all appetite was changed in haste,"  
Shouted the rest; and twofold double one—  
"Could thus, within the lofty tree robust,  
Preserve the germ that generates the just!"  
And turning to the pole which he had brought,  
He drew it close to foot of widowed bough  
From whence 'twas ta'en, and left it bound below.  
So bloom our plants, when first increase of light  
Comes blended with the ray that leaves behind  
The Pisces' sign celestial less defined,  
And swelling bud; and each again renewed  
With its own colour, ere the flaming car  
Has yoked its coursers 'neath another star:  
Thus less than the rose, than violet more,  
Its colours opening, sprang the plant so fair,  
Whose boughs appeared of late so thin and bare.  
I knew it not, nor here below is sung  
The hymn that waked the echoes of that race,  
Nor to the end endured its lingering grace.  
If I could paint how closed at last in sleep  
The cruel eyes, when Syrinx charmed the ear—  
The eyes whose lengthened vigils cost so dear—  
Like painter then, who from a study paints,  
I would delineate how I fell asleep.  
But paint who has the skill my slumber deep;  
I pass along to moment when I waked,  
And say, that sudden splendour tore the veil  
Of sleep, and cry of—"Rise: what do you ail?"  
As when beholding flowers of that fruit-tree  
Whose apple angels covet to be given,  
Which makes perpetual nuptials in the heaven,

Peter, and John, and James, conducted there,  
O'ercome with sleep, first heard the voice that spoke,  
By which a greater sleep than theirs was broke ;  
Moses, Elias vanished from their sight,  
Their Master's robe was turned to glistening white :  
Thus came I to myself ; saw pitying one  
Still standing o'er me, who had led the way  
Along the blooming bank and river gay ;  
And, full of doubt, I cried—"Where's Beatrice ?"  
" 'Tis but this moment she sat down, you see,  
Beneath the leaf, upon the root of tree.  
And see the company around her met !  
And, after Gryphon, high in air how float  
With sweeter song the rest, and deeper note."  
If after more diffuse her words I know not,  
For in my eyes already was her form  
Enclosed ; to nothing else could eyesight turn.  
Alone she was, and on her mother earth,  
And like a guard upon the chariot left,  
I saw attached unto the Biform swift.  
They made a cloister of themselves around,  
The sisters seven, with lamps so bright in hand,  
Secure from northern and from southern wind.  
"A little while shalt thou be sylvan here,  
And, with me, perpetual citizen  
Of that Rome, where Christ himself's a Roman.  
To profit world which is inclined to ill,  
Upon the chariot keep your eyes ; and write,  
When you return, the things that met your sight."  
Near Beatrice, devoted at her feet,  
To her commands attentive to incline,



And to her wishes to surrender mine.  
Ne'er with such rapid motion left a cloud  
A fiery bolt, when rushing rain is found  
To fall within horizon's farthest bound,  
As I beheld the bird of heaven descend  
Right through the tree, and rending all the bark,  
Much more the flow'rets and the leaflets dark,  
And struck the chariot with all his force :  
It yielded, like a ship at random driven,  
Now plunging in the waves, now prow to heaven.  
Afterwards I saw into the bosom spring,  
Of that triumphal chariot, a fox,  
Whose mouth the gauntest line of famine locks ;  
But, reprehended for his ugly faults  
By lady mine, he turned, and pressed his flight  
Fast as his bone and skin could leave the sight.  
And then the station leaving where he was,  
The eagle saw I climb the chariot-seat,  
And leave some feathers in his short retreat.  
Such voice as issues from a heart that mourns  
Issued from heaven, the words to break our sleep—  
"My little bark, but thou art laden deep!"  
And then appeared the earth to ope its mouth  
Within the wheels, and dragon issued out,  
That drew his tail along through chariot ;  
And like a wasp, that draweth back his sting,  
His tail malignant through the chariot drew—  
With joy exulting as its frame fell through.  
And what remained was like the bright green grass  
Upon the turf, upward might plumage rush—  
Offered, perchance, with chaste and pious wish.



Once more new covered and fresh covered was  
The one and other wheel, the pole, as fleet  
As after sigh the lips will haste to meet ;  
Transforming thus, the saintly edifice  
Put forth its heads at every part around :  
One on each side, three on the beam were found..  
The first were like the oxen horned, but four  
Had but a single horn upon their brow—  
Was never seen such monster until now.  
On lofty mountain, as a rock secure,  
There sat upon it like a shameless whore,  
With eyebrow wandering from shore to shore.  
To guard that none might steal away her form,  
I saw beside her there a giant stand,  
And now and then I saw their kisses blend.  
But as her covetous and wandering gaze  
Had turned on me, I saw this lover fell  
Begin to scourge her from the head to heel ;  
Then, of suspicion full and cruel wrath,  
The monster loosed her, dragged her through the wood :  
Its foliage shielded me as far as 't could  
From harlot, and from savage hardihood.

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### CANTO XXXIII.

“THE heathen, Lord, are come !” alternately,  
Or thrice or four times, their sweet psalmody  
Began they thus the ladies weepingly ;

And Beatrice, sorrowful and sighing,  
Listened in such a frame, with so much loss,  
Less changed was Mary at the foot of cross.  
But when the other virgins gave her place  
To speak, she rose at last upon her feet,  
And answered, colouring like fire—"But yet  
A little while, and ye shall see me not :  
Again, beloved sisters ! change shall be ;  
A little while, and then you shall see me."  
In front of her then set the whole of seven,  
And after that made signs to me alone,  
And to the sage besides, to follow on.  
So went she : and it could not be, I think,  
More than her tenth step planted on the ground,  
When from her eyes mine eyes received a wound ;  
And with her tranquil aspect then she said—  
"Come forward, so that I may speak with thee,  
And thou may'st listen well and easily."  
As soon as I was placed beside her then,  
"Brother," she said, "no wishfulness I see  
To gain by question, while you walk with me."  
Like those who are by far too reverent  
Before superior, when they talk with one,  
Scarce through the teeth can draw a single tone,  
It happened so, without a sound entire,  
I said—"My lady, all my want you know,  
And also what will meliorate this woe."  
And she to me—"To fear as well as shame,  
I wish that thou shouldst yield to them no more,  
Like one who speaks before his dream is o'er.  
Know, then, the vessel that the serpent broke

Was and is not : let him in fault believe,  
Vengeance of heaven the sop will not deceive.  
For ever not without an heir shall be  
The eagle of the plumed chariot's way,  
Who made it monster first, and then a prey.  
I see assuredly, and therefore tell,  
The stars e'en now approaching nearer are,  
Free from impediment and every bar ;  
For in the year five hundred, five, and ten,  
A messenger from God shall slay that one,  
That giant also that partakes her sin.  
And if, perchance, my narrative is dark,  
As Themis or as Sphynx persuade thee not,  
Since in their way the intellect 'twill blot ;  
The facts will soon develop Naiad-like,  
Which will dissolve their strong enigma's hold,  
Nor damage light on field, or yet on fold.  
Mark thou, and as from me these words are sent,  
Teach them—the living—they whose life's indeed  
A race, they run until their death succeed.  
And when thou writest, be sure retain in mind,  
Not to conceal that thou hast seen the plant  
That twice ere now has felt the spoiler's hand :  
Whoever robs, whoever plucks of this,  
Commits a blasphemy against his God,  
Who for his use created it for good.  
For eating this, in pain and in desire,  
Five thousand years and more the primal elf  
Looked out for Him who venged it on himself.  
Thy genius slumbers, if it mark not right  
That cause so singular, why soaring high,

And thus expanding, it ascends the sky.  
And were it not to Elsa's water's cold  
Thy vainer thoughts in idle current tend,  
And dream how Pyramus the mulberry stained,  
In such circumstances—in such alone,  
God's justice sure to thee might shine throughout  
The lesson of the interdicted fruit.  
But since I see thee in thy intellect  
Composed of stone, and that with sin too stained,  
So that the dazzling of my words has pained,  
Unwritten though, delineate at the least  
Within thy breast, and keep it there in calm,  
Like staff the pilgrim bears enwreathed with palm.”  
And I—“ Like wax beneath constraining seal,  
Whose pressure form will never change again,  
Such and so printed is by thee my brain.  
But why so far and high beyond my sight  
Your wished-for speech above my fancy plays—  
Still lost the more the more I strive to gaze ?”  
“ That you may know,” she said, “ the school I mean,  
Which thou hast followed ; and behold the skill,  
How far it follows all my words at will—  
And see how far your way is from divine—  
Far as from earth and its discordant strain,  
To highest, happiest heaven we attain.”  
To her I answered—“ I remember not  
That I was e'er at all estranged from thee—  
Not conscience' self for this has rated me.”  
“ If you cannot to memory recall,”  
Smiling, was her reply, “ remember how  
You drank of Lethe's waters even now ;

And if a smoke can evidence a flame,  
From that oblivion itself conclude  
The fault within thy will before pursued.  
And now, in truth, my words shall naked be,  
Whose plainness self shall come to succour you,  
And answer to thy rude unskilful view.”  
More brilliant now, but with more ling’ring steps,  
The sun possessed mid circle of the sky  
Whose aspect changes with its place on high :  
Now checked their speed, halted as one will halt  
Who’s sent as escort on to lead a band,  
If aught of novelty appear at hand ;  
The ladies seven at end of ancient wood,  
Like those whose bright green leaves and darker boughs  
The Alps sustain amid their colder snows.  
In front of them Euphrates, Tigris ran,  
And issued from a fountain to my sight,  
Like friends who linger ere they part outright.  
“ O light ! O glory of the human race !  
What water runs to regions undescried,  
Both from its source and from itself so wide ?”  
To such request the answer was—“ Entreat  
Matilda, that she tell.” And she replied,  
Like one who’s blamed who puts the blame aside,  
That lady fair—“ Both this and many things  
He has been told by me ; and I am sure  
Not Lethe’s waters can the words obscure.”  
And Beatrice—“ Some greater care, perchance,  
That often robs the memory of its power,  
Has made the meaning in your eyes obscure :  
But see Eunoe ! see from whence derived !

Lead him to it, and, in accustomed way,  
His fainting virtue in new force array.”  
As courteous soul who never makes excuse,  
But in another’s will can find its own,  
Soon as by outward sign that will is known—  
Thus, when I was close to her, the lovely  
Lady onward moved, and said to Statius  
Gently, familiarly—“ Come thou with him.”  
Reader, had I but longer space to write,  
I might describe to thee, in part, the taste  
Of draught that’s ever sweet, nor waste  
The time ; but leaves are all already full  
Appointed for the second canticle,  
Nor curb nor rein permit to use the will.  
Returned I from that holiest of waves  
Refreshed in spirit, like the new-sprung plants,  
Renewed with foliage suited to their wants,  
Pure, and disposed to climb unto the stars.

# P A R A D I S E





# THE VISION OF DANTE

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## Paradise

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### CANTO I.

THE glory of Him who moveth all things  
Pierceth the universe, and shines so fair,  
More at one part, and less, perchance, elsewhere.  
In heaven, that drinks the deepest of the light,  
Was I, and saw what to recount to sense  
He knows not how, nor can, who comes from thence ;  
Because, approaching nearer its desire,  
Dives intellect to such a depth profound  
That memory fails, and cannot go beyond.  
In truth of that dominion's power, whate'er  
I can find room to treasure in my mind,  
Be now the subject in my song enshrined.  
O good Apollo ! to this labour last  
Lend aid, and make me vessel for such birth  
As thy loved laurel asks, that plant of worth.  
Thus far one ridge, Parnassus, of thy hill

Sufficed ; now is there greater need of two,  
To enter on th' enduring task I view.  
Visit my breast, my thoughts thyself inspire,  
As when Marsyas heretofore you drew  
From out the sheath his limbs around him threw.  
Diviner virtue ! if you grant the skill  
To shadow forth the views of happy realm,  
Reflected from the mind they overwhelm,  
Behold ! my steps approach the much-loved tree,  
And see ! I come to crown thee with the leaves,  
Which from the theme and you my mind receives.  
If but few the times they come to gather 't, Sire !  
Cæsar or poet, for triumphant brows,  
'Tis fault or shame of human will that grows.  
What cheerful joy the Delphic god must crown,  
And bloom amid the dark Peneian groves,  
When but a single branch such power moves.  
The spark comes first, and then a mighty flame—  
And after me they'll pray with better voice,  
Nor rocky Cirrha their request denies.  
To mortals riseth through the varying ways  
The lantern of the world ; in those confines  
Which circles fourfold with the crosses joins,  
With better purport, and with brighter skill  
Conjoined, he issues, and the mundane wax  
Tempers and moulds beneath his slow attacks.  
'Twas morning there, and evening where we were—  
For such that aspect made ; and there all white  
The hemisphere, on other side 'twas night :  
When Beatrice, upon the left-hand side,  
I saw turned round, regarding then the sun,

With such a look beyond an eagle's ken.  
And as reflection of a ray is wont  
To issue from its source, aspire from urn,  
Like pilgrim homeward longing to return,  
Her act transfused its influence through my eyes :  
In imaged form another action made,  
With keener gaze mine eyes the sun surveyed.  
Much lawful there to virtue such as ours,  
Not lawful here—but in that happy place,  
Made for the dwelling of the human race.  
I could not suffer it, but in the time  
I saw the sparks come issuing forth around,  
Like iron boiling from the furnace ground :  
And, on a sudden, day was joined to day,  
As if that One, to whom the means belong,  
Had decked the heavens with another sun.  
Absorbed, and gazing on the eternal wheels,  
Stood Beatrice, with eyes that fixed on them,  
And I on her, apart from upward beam ;  
And in her aspect such and so became  
As Glaucus was, when he partook of wort  
Which made him in the sea with gods consort.  
'Tis not in man to signify by speech :  
But one example is enough for those  
On whom experience its grace bestows.  
If I were but the creature that thou framedst  
Anew, O Love ! which regulat'st the heaven,  
Thou know'st thy light to raise me up was given.  
And hence the wheel thou roll'st for ever on,  
Desired One ! enchained to it my ear  
With harmony prepared, attempered here.

And then there seemed as much of heaven inflamed  
With solar flame, that neither rain nor stream  
E'er formed a lake to match with that, I deem.  
The novelty of sound, and that great light,  
The cause inflamed me with desire to know—  
I never felt with such a zeal below.  
Whence she who saw, as well as I myself,  
The troubled mind, to quiet me, in truth,  
Was ready, ere I asked, to open mouth.  
And she commenced—"Imagination false  
Hath made thee dull, so that thou canst not see  
That thou might'st, hadst thou looked diligently.  
Thou art not on the earth, as thou believest ;  
For lightnings to their native place which fly,  
Ne'er fled so swift as you returned on high."  
Divested thus of doubt, the first I mean,  
By these brief little words, and by her smile,  
Entangled now but in a lighter toil.  
And said—"Content already I reposed,  
With admiration great, but now admire,  
Than these so light that I should soar the higher."  
Whence she, at ending of a piteous sigh,  
Her eye directed to me with that look  
Delirious child will from its mother brook ;  
And then commenced—"As many things as are  
Have order in themselves ; and thus the form  
Which makes the universe to God conform.  
'Tis here the lofty creature sees the trace  
Of that eternal value, the allotted end  
To which the line once drawn must ever tend.  
'Tis in this order natures all incline ;

Of diverse sorts and different length of course,  
Some farther from, some nearer to the source ;  
And hence this motion is to different parts,  
Through the great sea of being, and each one  
With that same instinct given which bears him on :  
This carries all the fire towards the moon,  
This agitates the depths of mortal hearts ;  
This tends to earth, inanimate in parts.  
Nor creatures void of sense alone it strikes,  
This bow from which the winged arrows move,  
But those who have both intellect and love :  
For Providence, adjusting all its right,  
With its own light can ever quiet heaven,  
Where fleetest thing around is ever driven :  
And thither now, as to appointed rest,  
We're borne along by that resistless string,  
That never flies but with a happy wing.  
'Tis true, as shape will often not accord  
To art's conception, and its first intent—  
As substance to reply will not assent—  
So from this course the innate power to part  
The creature has, and of its own free will  
To bend, inclining to direction still :  
And just as one might see the lightning fall  
From out the cloud, that at the first attack  
Was pleased to lean where earth's attractions act.  
Admire no more, if rightly I esteem,  
Thy climbing high, which, like a rapid rill,  
From lofty mountain sinks to lower hill.  
Wonder it had been, if devoid wert thou  
Of all impediment, residing there—

On earth a living and a quiet fire !”

From thence she turned her face towards the heaven.

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## CANTO II.

O YE ! who are on board the little bark,  
And fain would listen as the ocean laves  
Behind my ship, which, singing, cuts the waves,  
Turn once again, review your native shores ;  
Nor trust yourselves without a chart on sea,  
Where you are lost if you relinquish me.  
The deep I pass was never crossed before ;  
Minerva fills the sails—Apollo leads—  
New Muses now reveal where Ursa treads.  
Ye other few, who, with extended neck,  
Can timely seek that angel's food which they  
Who live upon ne'er feel satiety ;  
You well may steer across the salt sea-wave,  
If you but trace the line of smoother tide,  
Where spreads the vessel's wake on either side.  
Those glorious ones who once to Colchis passed,  
Admired not so, behind adventurous prow,  
To see their Jason through the billows plough :  
The innascent and perpetual thirst  
Of heaven-formed kingdom bears you on its wing,  
Almost as swiftly as to heaven you spring.  
Beatrice looked on high, I looked on her :  
From when the arrow's notched upon the string  
Until 'tis loosed, and flies on feathered wing,

So quick I found myself 'mong wondrous things,  
And turned myself to her. And she, whose care  
Was ever on me, negligent was ne'er,  
Turned e'en to me so beautiful and glad :—  
“Direct thy grateful mind to God,” she said,  
“Through whom to this, the primal star, we've sped.”  
It seemed to me a cloud had come around,  
Lucid, and thick, and solid, polished o'er  
Like adamant that feels the solar power.  
We entered through the everlasting pearl,  
That received as th' unbroken wave receives  
A ray of light, and no division leaves.  
If body then—and we cannot conceive  
How one dimension thus another hides—  
When body thus through body entering glides,  
Ought not desire to feel a higher flame,  
To see that essence in the heavenly lights,  
Which show how nature ours and God unites !  
There may be seen all that we hold by faith,  
To proof not subject, but to knowledge clear,  
Like truth, and at the first acknowledged here.  
I replied—“My lady ! devoutly I,  
As far as possible, must thank Him now,  
Who has removed me from the world below.  
But tell me, what and whence the clouded marks  
This body bears, which down below on earth  
To such a fabling talk of Cain gives birth ?”  
She smiled a little, then—“If mortals err  
In their opinion thus,” she said, “where sense  
Hath lost the keys that banish doubt from hence.  
Why should you doubt or sink beneath its power,



Or admiration pierce thee with its stings ?  
Reason, you see, must fail with shortened wings :—  
But tell me what you think of this yourself.”  
And I—“ That which appears diverse above,  
I think, is where the dense and rarer move.”  
And she—“ Immersed in what is false, you’ll see  
Your own opinion if you list to me,  
And mark the reason which outfaceth thee.  
The octave sphere displays unnumbered lights,  
The which in quality, and in amount  
Of diverse figures, you may freely count.  
If denseness, rarity, occasioned this,  
One single virtue would abide in all,  
Distributed to each, proportioned fall.  
But diverse virtues cannot but proceed  
From formal principles ; and all, but one,  
According to thy rule, are left and gone.  
Were rareness, then, the cause of that obscure  
Which thou investigatest at other place,  
The planet would be void—an empty space.  
And as a body turns from thick to lean,  
And thus the varying magnitude receives—  
The volume’s thinner and its thicker leaves.  
If ’twere the first, it would at once appear  
In the eclipses of the sun, here bright,  
And there, again, ’twould seem as dark as night.  
It is not so, and now consider how.  
The other is, if chance the other fail,  
Thy opinion’s in the downward scale ;  
For if this rareness passeth not quite through,  
A limit must be where opposing meets,



And from its contrary the ray retreats ;  
And thus the other beam's reflected back,  
Just as the colour will return, not pass,  
Where lead is hid behind transparent glass.  
Now thou wilt say it is of darker hue,  
The ray in this part, than it is elsewhere,  
Because refracted more it turns to rear.  
From instances like that, experience' aid  
Will free, if to its realm, your doubting thoughts you bring,  
From whence descending, arts derive their spring.  
Three mirrors take, and two remove from thee  
At certain distance, and the other more ;  
Between the two retain thine eyes ; before  
Turning to them, see that behind your back  
A light be placed, the mirrors to inflame,  
That all returning may reflect the same :  
While so far only is removed to view,  
And not to space more lengthened, you will see  
The light from all resplendent equally.  
As to percussions of the warmer rays  
The naked earth beneath the snow appears,  
And verdure smiles amid dissolving tears ;  
Unveiling thus from clouds obscure thy sense,  
I will inform, with light so lively keen,  
That in thy face 'twill tremble and be seen.  
Within the heaven of peace that is divine  
Revolves a body, in whose virtue lies  
Essential good, that all its want supplies ;  
The heaven that follows, with its numerous views,  
Divideth thus the essences distinct,  
And yet contained within its folds succinct.

Their varying ways the others circle through,  
As that distinction which they have within  
Defines their limits and their seeds that spring.  
'Tis thus these organs of the world advance  
In due degrees, as thou beholdest now,  
And what's received above transmit below.  
Regard thou well, and see me pass the ford,  
To find the truth through such a devious round,  
That you may keep the safe and shallow ground.  
The motion and the virtue of the gyres,  
As by the cunning art of workmen made,  
The blessed impulse needs must have obeyed ;  
And heaven, made beautiful by many lights  
From the deep mind that rolls it on its sphere,  
Its image borrows till the seal appear.  
And as the soul, within surrounding dust,  
Through differing yet conforming members takes  
Its diverse powers, and so a difference makes ;  
Intelligence, diffusing thus itself,  
Is multiplied and spread through every star  
In unity revolving : though, so far,  
Different virtue makes a different league  
With body precious, in the which 'tis rife,  
And, as in you, just so it springs to life.  
From nature joyful, and from thence derived,  
Shines virtue, mingled through the body so,  
Like joy will in the living pupils glow.  
From this proceeds that it from light to light  
Appears so different—not from dense and rare—  
And thus the formal principle will bear,  
Proportioned to its power, the dusk or clear."

## C A N T O   I I I.

THAT sun, which once my breast with love inflamed,  
Had now fair truth discovered all as bright,  
Proving—disproving—its delightful sight.  
Corrected now, and free from doubting thought,  
To show myself, as reason could expect,  
I raised my head and drew myself erect ;  
But vision there appeared which me retained  
So fixed, to contemplate itself the while,  
I thought no more of my confession toil.  
As through transparent and through solid glass,  
Or when you look through pure and tranquil streams,  
And not so deep but that their channel beams,  
Return the fainter lineaments of face,  
Like a white pearl upon the whiter brow,  
And not less strong, our pupils must allow ;  
So saw I faces many, prompt to speak :  
Unlike his error, that is known to fame,  
Who fell in love with shadow in the stream.  
Soon as I perceived, I bent on them mine eyes,  
Regarding them as mirrored images,  
The which to contemplate my eyes would please ;  
But nothing saw, and then withdrew my sight,  
Directed to the glance of that sweet guide,  
Who smiled with fire beneath her pure eyelid.  
“ Now marvel not,” she said, “ because I smile  
Thy boyish thought to see, that will not suit,  
Since on the truth you cannot place your foot,

Revolving round your wish that has no root.  
True substances are these you look on now,  
And to this sphere tied down for breach of vow ;  
But yet converse with them, hear and believe,  
That the true light, with which they're satisfied,  
Will not allow their steps to turn aside."  
To shade I turned, that seemed more curious there,  
Addressed myself to speak, my thoughts t' impart,  
Like one from over-eagerness who loses heart.  
"O well-created spirit ! in the rays  
Of life eternal canst that sweetness feel  
Which he must taste who wishes to reveal ;  
'Twere gracious to me, would you but consent  
To tell me both the name and lot you bear."  
With laughing eyes she answered prompt and fair,  
"Our charity can never bar the gate  
To just desire, if not like her's above,  
Who would have all her court like her—in love.  
In the world I was a virgin sister ;  
And if thy mind can well regard me here,  
More lovely, not less known, I will appear.  
You will recognise that I'm Piccarda ;  
With these blest, too, am stationed in this place,  
And happy in the sphere of tardier race ;  
For our affections are alone inflamed  
With the delight the Holy Spirit gives,  
In which each soldier of his order lives.  
This lot we bear, which seems to be so low,  
Is ours because neglected were our vows,  
And even void, for candour that allows."  
Whence I to her—"In your admired aspects

Resplendent shines, I know not what, divine,  
The altered likeness of the earlier coin,  
And therefore to remember I was slow.  
But what you say, assists my lagging mind—  
Retracing now far readier I find.  
But tell me, ye who are so happy here,  
Desire you e'er a loftier place than this,  
More to behold with more of friendship's bliss ? ”  
With those, the other spirits, first she smiled,  
And then replied to me with so great joy,  
It burned like early love without alloy—  
“Brother ! our will is tranquil, and can find  
Virtue in charity, with which we wish  
That only which we have, ambition hush.  
Should we desire to be above our place,  
Discordant then our wishes must appear  
With His—the will of Him who placed us here—  
Which were impossible within these gyres,  
If charity must be our native sphere,  
And its bright character you well revere.  
And to this blessed state it more belongs  
To keep itself within the rule divine,  
And make our wills to His alone incline.  
Thus onward as we move, from step to step,  
Through all this kingdom, undisturbed in peace,  
As the King's self, his own desire must please ;  
In his good-will, our only peace resides :  
That is the law to which all currents tend,  
Creation all—all that on it depend.”  
Then was it clear to me how every place  
In heaven is paradise, though heavenly grace

Falls not in equal shower on every place.  
As one food, when it happens, will suffice,  
And yet the appetite for other last—  
Give thanks for one, for other make request :  
'Twas so I did with action, and with word,  
To see that she, what web it was, would point,  
Which had not drawn the shuttle to account.  
“ A perfect life and lofty merit placed  
The lady high in heaven,” said she, “ whose rule,  
Within your world, of robe and veil's the school.  
So that to latest breath they watch and sleep,  
With Him the bridegroom who each vow receives,  
Which glowing love to please him ever weaves.  
From world, to follow her, when yet but young  
I fled, and in her habit wrapt myself enclosed,  
And vowed to follow life her sect imposed.  
But men, who were more prone to ill than good,  
Snatched me beyond the pale of cloister sweet :  
God knows if, after that, my life was meet.  
This other splendour, which I show to thee,  
On my right side, enkindled bright and clear  
With all the light of our celestial sphere—  
The words of me may yet be told of her.  
Was sister, too, and from her brow was torn  
The shade of sacred bands she once had worn.  
But after she re-entered world, constrained  
Against her meaning and her better use,  
Not from her heart the veil would she unloose.  
This is the light of that Costanza great,  
Who of the second wind of Suabia bore  
The third and last, who held the Empire's power.”

'Twas thus she spoke to me. And then "Ave  
Maria" they sang: through the waves they went,  
Like heavy body with a quick descent.  
My gaze, which followed far as sight could do,  
When they were lost, turned round to object nigher,  
And sought the haven of mine eyes' desire,  
And turned to Beatrice entirely round.  
And then like lightning did her eye advance,  
So that, at first, I could not bear her glance,  
Which made me slow to mask my ignorance.

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## CANTO IV.

BETWEEN two distant and two moving foods,  
At equal pace, one might of famine die  
Before man ventured first his teeth to try.  
And as a lamb, betwixt two ravening wolves,  
Of both of them seems equally afraid;  
And as betwixt two deer a hound has staid—  
Myself, though silent then, I do not blame,  
Suspended thus o'er doubts on faltering ways,  
Because it needs must, neither do I praise.  
I held my peace; but my desire appeared  
Depicted in my face, and the request  
More lively there than if by speech expressed.  
And Beatrice was so as Daniel, when,  
Of old, he soothed Nebuchadnezzar's wrath,  
Which drove him on injustice' wicked path,



And said,—‘ I well perceive how both desires  
Have bound thee now, that feeling scarce respires.  
Thou reasonest, If my good intentions last,  
Why should another’s violence prevent  
My merit reaching to its fair extent ?  
Again thou findest food for doubt, because  
The souls appear returning to the stars,  
As Plato writes in philosophic wars.  
These are the questions which your wishes urge  
With equal force, and therefore I will treat  
Of that where more of difficulties meet.  
Of seraphim, the one the most sublime,  
Of Moses, of Samuel, either John  
You choose to take, nor Mary let alone—  
No souls have they in other heaven than this,  
In which the spirits that you saw appeared ;  
Nor life with ages less or more secured ;  
But all make beautiful the primal round,  
And differently partake of sweeter life.  
Eternity in differing bosoms rife,  
Here shown ; but not because the destined sphere  
For them : rather to you they are a sign  
Of that celestial which is least divine :  
For so ’tis meet to speak to mortal mind ;  
For only from the sense can it discern  
That to which intellect may after turn.  
And thus, we know, the Scripture condescends  
To meet our faculties, and feet and hands  
To God attributes, though not such intends ;  
And holy church with human aspect, too.  
Can Gabriel and Michael represent,



Him who new vigour to Tobias lent.  
That which Timæus of the soul affirms,  
Resembles not the state of things we see,  
But, as he says, such must his feeling be.  
The soul, he says, returneth to its star,  
Believing that at first 'twas ta'en from thence,  
When Nature gave it form and breathing sense.  
Perhaps his thoughts were of another guise,  
And different from the sound of voice, to shun,  
If that could be, the arrows of derision.  
And if he meant, that to these orbs returns  
The honour of their influence and blame,  
Perchance his bow has struck the mark of fame.  
This principle, ill understood, has sent  
The universal world astray, to name  
Jupiter, Mercury, Mars, worship them.  
The other doubt which agitates thy mind  
Hath less of poison ; in its evil taste  
No banishment of thee from me is placed.  
Our justice, too, would seem to be unjust  
In mortal eyes ; but in the thought there's room  
For faith, and not for heresy and gloom.  
But that your penetration may aspire  
To know the grounds of this important truth,  
Thy wish I'll satisfy in sober sooth.  
If violence there be, when they who suffer  
Give no consent to him who offers force,  
Not so is such a case without remorse.  
The will that wills not still survives unquenched,  
But acts as Nature does within a fire :  
Contorted thousand times, it will not tire ;

For if it yield at all, it follows force.  
And thus they did who still retained the grace  
Of yet returning to the holy place ;  
For had th' enduring will remained entire  
That held Laurentio o'er the embers clear,  
Or guarded Mutius, to his hand severe,  
Then had they soon regained the narrow path,  
Though drawn away, when once their steps were free :  
But will so firm as this 'tis rare to see.  
And by these words, if you collect their sense,  
Your former argument is broken through,  
Which once perplexed and mystified your view.  
But other thought traverses now thy mind,  
And occupies thine eyes, and tires thyself,  
Nor canst thou issue from its rocky shelf.  
I have for certain in thy memory placed  
This thing, that blessed soul can never lie,  
To the first truth because 'tis ever nigh :  
And yet Piccarda might inform thee, too,  
Affection for the veil Costanza held ;  
And so far thus my reason were repelled.  
But oft ere now, my brother, has been seen  
To flee from peril, that, against the grain,  
One does a deed that makes the stars complain ;  
Alcmæon-like, who, at his father's prayer,  
Slew his own mother—moved in duty's name—  
For pity's sake who pitiless became.  
At this same point I'd have you ponder, then,  
How force can mingle, countervail the will,  
So that offence is inexcusable.  
The will that's absolute consenteth not,

But fear, accompanying, consenteth so—  
From fear of worse, it cannot utter No :  
Wherefore Piccarda, when she mentions that,  
Means but to speak of absolute intent,  
And I of other, so we both assent.”  
Such was the eddying of the sacred stream,  
From out the fount whence every truth’s derived ;  
And such the store my wandering search has hived.  
“ O thou ! the love of early lover high !”  
Replied I then, “ whose ardent speech o’erflows,  
While new-sprung vigour in my bosom glows,  
Affection cannot reach the depth profound  
That were enough to render grace for grace,  
But He who sees, and can, the gift o’erpays.  
Our intellect, I see, is never pleased,  
Unless that truth illustrate it, which high  
As truth can soar, and through a heavenly sky.  
In it we rest, like wild beast in his den,  
Where we have reached, if we have power to gain,  
Else would our wishes have been given in vain ;  
And hence, like sapling, at the root of truth  
The doubt will spring, and Nature’s vigour still  
Will prompt us on to rise from hill to hill.  
And this invites me, lady ! this allures,  
Another truth with reverence to insure,  
Which to my intellect is yet obscure.  
I fain would know if man can satisfy  
Defective vows with other works of good,  
Which in your standard come to be allowed ?”  
Beatrice regarded me with eyes that shone  
With sparks of love, with brilliance so divine,

My virtue powerless relinquished rein ;  
My eyes declined, for looking was in vain.

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## CANTO V.

“ IF I inflame thee with the torch of love  
Beyond the custom of terrestrial law,  
So that thine eyes may feel its conquering awe,  
Wonder thou not, for know that this proceeds  
From perfect vision, as it apprehends ;  
So nearer to the good its motion tends.  
And how resplendent shines th’ eternal light  
Within thy intellect, I well can prove,  
For sight alone will ever kindle love ;  
’Tis but a vestige from that brilliant view,  
Of undiscovered kind, which yet shines through.  
You wish to know if other service can,  
For vows which have been lost, avail so far,  
As from the spirit to remove the war ?”  
Thus Beatrice began on this intent ;  
And, like a man who ceases not to speak,  
Continued thus the strain she did not break :—  
“ The greatest gift that God, creating, gave  
Of his great bounty, and his goodness cost,  
And that which he appreciated the most,  
Was human liberty and our free will ;  
With which the creatures of intelligence,  
And they alone, were dowered as with sense.

And now thou may'st deduce at once from this  
The lofty value of the vow so made,  
If God consent to thy obedience paid ;  
For in the compact which God strikes with man,  
He makes the victim of this treasure great,  
Such as I say, and gives its proper weight.  
What can we then return for recompense,  
Of what we offered should we keep the use?  
And thieves in labour qualify abuse.  
And now you know the more important point.  
But holy church hath this same thing repealed,  
Which seems opposed to truth I have revealed :  
Then at the table sit a little more,  
That the crude meal you may in time digest,  
And find some aid to give your spirit rest.  
Open your mind to what I shall explain,  
And lock within ; for science cannot be,  
Unless, if understood, you keep the key.  
The essential nature of the sacrifice  
Two things requires—the thing of which 'tis made,  
And then the compact which the mind obeyed.  
This last is never cancelled till it find  
A sure observance, and its bounding lines  
Marked by the letter which small space confines.  
Necessity upon the Hebrews lay  
To offer somewhat—offering might be changed ;  
But then the right of sacrifice avenged.  
The other substance, if its kind were known,  
Might well be such, and in its place be ranged,  
If with the other it could be exchanged.  
Shift not the burden from thy shoulder, then,

Nor follow will, but let your mind obey,  
Unless you have the white and yellow key :  
For every change, believe me, is but vain,  
Unless whate'er 's divided you can fix  
In figure, like the four within the six.  
Whate'er it be whose value is so much,  
That it surpasses other's weight in scale,  
Can ne'er be satisfied with less avail.  
Take heed, ye mortals ! trifle not with vows,  
But faithful be ; but not like Jephtha's tongue,  
To keep the vow which he pronounced, though wrong :  
Better for him to say—" I have done ill,"  
Than keep his vow, and acting thus do worse.  
Like the great leader of the Grecian force,  
Whence Iphigenia mourned her beauty vain ;  
And made to mourn the simple and the wise,  
And all who hear of such a fell emprise.  
Ye Christians ! be less movable, more grave—  
Nor like a feather turn to every wind,  
For every water will not wash the mind.  
The Testaments you have, both Old and New—  
The Shepherd of the Church to guide the way,  
And thus salvation on your steps to stay.  
If evil lust entice you from the path,  
Be men at once, and not like stupid beeves,  
Lest laughter seize the Jew when he perceives :  
Not like the lamb, that foolishly forsakes  
His mother's milk, and, wanton and astray,  
Fights with himself, nor finds another play."  
Thus Beatrice addressed me as I write,  
And then she turned around with full desire,

Where shone the world, and with a living fire.  
Her changing countenance and silent lips  
My eager genius checked, which now no more  
Pursued the train of questions as before.  
And as the wingèd arrow strikes the mark,  
Before the trembling cord has lost its force,  
The second kingdom met our rapid course.  
I saw my lady look so joyful here,  
Whene'er she reached that heaven, and felt its light,  
That e'en the planet's lustre grew more bright.  
And if the star itself could change and smile,  
What could my nature do, so prone to yield  
To change, and take the pressure that is sealed !  
As in the pond that's tranquil, and is fair,  
The fishes gather to whatever's viewed,  
Because they think it is their proper food,  
I saw, I'm sure, a thousand splendours draw  
To us : each accent through the air that moves,  
Was—" Lo, he comes who will increase our loves !"  
And as each one of them to us drew near,  
I saw each shade that seemed replete with bliss,  
Clear as the lightning issued that was his.  
Think, reader ! this commencement, should it not  
Proceed, the painful curiosity  
To know a little more, that would seize thee.  
How eager I was, you shall see, to know  
Somewhat of their condition, as was seen  
Within my eyes by their expression keen.  
" O happy born ! to whom to see the thrones  
Triumphant and eternal, it is given,  
While militant on earth, and not in heaven :



Th' enkindling light that spreads throughout the heaven,  
Inflaming us, comes out at your desire,  
To lighten you with all you can require !”  
So said a spirit, one of these, to me ;  
And Beatrice—“ You may believe,” said she,  
“ All that he says, as if a god were he.”  
“ I well can see how you appropriate light,  
As blend the rays within your eyes, the while,  
I see them shining, and I see thee smile :  
But yet I know not who you are, nor how,  
O worthy soul ! you keep allotted sphere  
Where other's rays allow not man to peer !”  
’Twas thus I spake directly to the light  
Which had accosted me ; and then the shade  
Became more shining, lustre more conveyed.  
So looks the sun, which, from excess of light  
And too much heat, less vision will allow,  
And raise the vapours that obscure his brow.  
’Twas thus that too much joy from me had hid  
Within the rays, the figure of the shade,  
And close concealed, as ’twas, the accents said,  
What in the following Canto will be read.

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## CANTO VI.

“ WHEN Constantine had first the eagle turned,  
Against the course of heaven it followed once,



Since time when first Lavinia led the dance,  
Two hundred years and more the bird of God  
Within the verge of Europe stooped its wing  
Close to the mountain-root from whence I spring ;  
Beneath the shadow of its sacred wings,  
Governed and gave the world from hand to hand,  
Which changing, came at last to my command.  
Cæsar I was, Justinian I am—  
While young affection held its early reign,  
Removed from laws the too much and the vain :  
Ere yet I was intent upon the work,  
In Christ one nature only I perceived,  
And such a faith contentedly received.  
But with his words blest Agapetus drew  
My soul upright, with a chief shepherd's care,  
To welcome faith that was much more sincere.  
Yes, I believed him ; and that speech of his  
I see as clear, and recognise as sooth,  
As you distinguish falsehood from the truth.  
Soon as my footsteps moved with holy church,  
God in his grace saw fit to give to me  
The lofty labour, with its company.  
From me came Belisarius' command,  
Which prospered so beneath approving heaven ;  
And to establish me was signal given.  
To the first question that you put, I've framed  
My answer now ; but its conditions ask  
Another movement and a farther task :  
And hence shall you behold with how much cause  
Against the sacred banner they have moved ;  
By whom appropriate, and by whom reproved :

With how much valour they proclaimed its worth,  
With how much reverence hailed, from period high,  
Its kingdom to insure made Pallas die.  
You know in Alba how it made sojourn  
Three hundred years, until the time when three  
Encountered three in hostile rivalry.  
You know what came from forth the Sabine wrong,  
Down to Lucretia's grief, with seven kings  
The neighbouring nations to its conquest brings.  
You know what once the illustrious Romans did  
'Gainst Brennus, Pyrrhus th' Epirote chief—  
Principalities, leagues, found no relief :  
Torquatus, Quintius from his uncombed hair  
Cincinnatus ; what Decius, Fabius calmed,  
Renowned whose fame I've willingly embalmed.  
And this attests the Arabian pride that passed  
In train of Hannibal, his march attends  
O'er Alpine rocks, from whence the Po descends.  
Beneath this banner Scipio, Pompey, fought,  
In youthful triumph ; and, beside the hill  
Where thou wert born, its memory's bitter still ;  
Until it was the time the heavens decreed  
To bring the world beneath its sway serene,  
It was, by will of Rome, by Cæsar ta'en.  
And what it did from Varo to the Rhine  
Isara saw, as well as the Loire, the Seine,  
And every vale the rapid Rhone can drain.  
And when it issued from Ravenna next,  
And leaped the Rubicon, the lofty flight  
Nor tongue nor pen can faithfully requite.  
And then toward Spain it turned the warrior band,

Dyrrachium smote, then struck Pharsalia's soil  
With such a shock as felt the warmer Nile ;  
Antandros, Simois, and its restless waves,  
Revisited ; the land where Hector lies ;  
And ill for Ptolemy its pinion flies ;  
And fell like lightning upon Juba's power ;  
And then returned against your West, full armed,  
At sound of the Pompeian trump alarmed.  
And what it did within the next one's grasp,  
Brutus and Cassius in the Inferno bark,  
Perugia, Modena, with grief remark ;  
And still for it sad Cleopatra weeps,  
Who fled before it to her latest gasp,  
And took the death of black and sudden asp.  
With him its course was to the Red Sea shore,  
To plant the world in universal peace,  
And make the creaking doors of Janus cease.  
And all that ensign did of which I speak,  
And was to do, ere much of ages run,  
Through mortal kingdom by its conquests won,  
Became apparently but small obscure  
To the third Cæsar's hand, if you inure  
A clearer eye and an affection pure.  
The living justice that inspires my breath,  
Consigned to him, the king of whom I speak,  
The glory to avenge, His wrath to wreak.  
And if at this astonished, I reply,  
When Titus' army entrance gained within,  
To pay the debt of long-enduring sin.  
And when the Lombard tooth had gnawed the church,  
Beneath its wings the Conqueror soothed its pain,

And succour came from arms of Charlemagne.  
Now may you judge both who and what they were  
Whom I accuse above, whose frequent ills  
The fullest measure of your suffering fills.  
Against the standard of his country, one  
The yellow lilies brought ; one claimed a part—  
The glaring evidence of deeper art.  
Beneath another sign the Ghibellines did  
Their works, but ill he follows sign, or ought,  
Who separates justice from his inmost thought.  
Let not the new-come Charles assail its power  
With Guelphs of his, but fear the talons hard  
Which of a loftier lion tore the beard.  
Many a time, ere this, the sons have wept  
Their parents' sins : nor leave thy faith to lag :  
Heaven's arms to change, and take the lilies' flag.  
This little star within its bounds contains  
Good spirits, here who once have active been  
Honor and fame to their embrace to win ;  
For all the wishes that they lavish there,  
Degenerate the real love is seen—  
With rays less living and an edge less keen.  
But in the measure that our wages reach,  
Where merit is, it forms a part of joy  
Upon the balance thus our thoughts t' employ.  
And here we see that living justice smile  
In us ; and that affection's reign prolong,  
That turns to good, and cannot lead to wrong.  
As diverse voices form the sweetest notes,  
Our life, the rank each different lot reveals,  
Is but sweet harmony among these wheels.

Within the dwellings of this present pearl  
Shines yet—the light of Romeo quenched is not,  
For noble work who little guerdon got.  
But the Provençals who opposed his sway,  
No cause had they to laugh : ill they proceed  
Who make a wrong of others' better deed.  
Four daughters had Raymond de Berenger,  
And every one a Queen : this Romeo did,  
Sent as he came, but in a pilgrim's weed.  
And their opprobrious words had stirred him on  
To ask for payment from this faithful one,  
And all the recompense was twelve for ten ;  
And then he went away both poor and old :  
And if the world had known the heart he had,  
Morsel to morsel begging thus his bread,  
It would have praised him more for every deed.

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## CANTO VII.

“ OSANNA Sanctus Deus Sabaoth !  
Super illustrans claritate tuâ  
Felices ignes horum malahoth.”  
’Twas thus, revolving on its proper wheel,  
I saw that substance in the act to sing,  
And from its shape redoubled lustre spring.  
Both it and all the others moved to dance,  
Like sparks, endued with great velocity,

Veil on a sudden, and to distance fly.  
I doubted then, and said within myself,  
“Speak to her—to my lady speak at first,  
With the sweet drops that she’d allay my thirst.”  
But that same reverence which o’ercame my mind,  
Even at the sound of Beatrice heard,  
Had bowed me down like one in slumber stirred.  
A little bore she this ; then Beatrice,  
At first irradiating, such smiles inspire  
As would have made man happy in the fire.  
“By my infallible conjecture made,  
How vengeance just could justly be avenged  
Is now the thought on which your mind is hinged.  
But I will soon dissolve the doubt of mind :  
And listen well, for my expressions make  
A present for thy mind and sense to take.  
Because he did not choose on strength of will  
To put a curb, he that was never born  
Both damned himself, and damned his race forlorn.  
And hence the human species lay infirm,  
And plunged for many an age in error grand :  
The Word of God it pleased to descend ;  
Estranged, and distant from its Maker, now  
United to himself in person shone,  
With act alone of his eternal love.  
And now direct thy view to that I treat :  
This nature, with its Maker union showed,  
At its creation, was sincere and good ;  
But, through itself, an exile it became  
From Paradise, because it turned away  
From way of truth, and led its life astray—

The punishment endured upon the cross.  
If you consider nature that he took,  
No juster penalty could nature brook ;  
Nor e'er was such injurious evil done,  
If you respect the suffering person there  
Contracted to us, and our nature's heir.  
For from one nature came effects diverse :  
God and the Jews it pleased that Christ should die—  
Earth shook, and heaven unclosed its gates on high.  
No longer think it was too strong to say,  
That the just vengeance was to be avenged  
By court of justice, punishment unchanged.  
But now I see the straitening of thy mind,  
From thought to thought its efforts to get free,  
And to unloose the knot unsolved by me.  
Thou say'st, that which I hear I well discern ;  
But wherefore God should choose (to me is hid)  
This way for our redemption, (and forbid.)  
Buried, my brother ! this decree must stand,  
From eyes whose youthful training cannot prove  
The blazing depth of everlasting love :  
Because, in truth, a token and a sign  
Much spoken of, and yet but little known.  
But why it was most worthy, you will own  
The goodness that 's divine all envy waives ;  
And in itself an ardour ever burns  
That pour its beauties in eternal urns,—  
No channel knows, but from the source distils,  
And has no end, but finds perpetual rest,  
Because with seal unchanging 'tis impressed.  
This from itself without the means rains down,

Both free and full, and no subjection brings  
To force or influence of novel things,—  
Can please the more, and more conform to him.  
The heavenly rays, from everything that fall,  
Resemble him when liveliest of all.  
These things advantaging the human mind,  
If only one should fail among them all,  
Its own nobility is sure to fall.  
'Tis sin that disfranchises it alone,  
And makes incongruous with highest good—  
With its fair light because no more imbued ;  
To its own dignity no more returns,  
If it should not, when its void essence wanes,  
Repay its false delight with just-felt pains.  
Your nature when it sinned entirely fell—  
In its own seed from dignities was changed—  
From them as well as Paradise estranged ;  
Nor could recover, search it as you may  
With subtlety, without by one you passed  
Of these two ways—the first named or the last :  
Either that God, from courtesy alone,  
Remit the sin, or man, if that denied,  
For his own sin himself had satisfied.  
Direct thine eye within the deep abyss  
Of that eternal counsel, as you can,  
And as my speech desires thee, think of man.  
No power had man within his native bounds  
Ever to satisfy, by stooping low  
In deep humility—obeying now  
As far as high he once had thought to go ;  
And this the reason, man was plainly free



Himself from every power to satisfy.  
Thus it behovèd God, with his own ways,  
Man to restore, and to his life and truth,—  
With one, I say, or e'en indeed with both.  
But since so great a work must gratify  
The more, the nearer that the goodness seen  
Of him whose heart the working cause has been,  
The goodness that's divine the world impressed,  
To show through all its ways it only meant  
To raise thee higher to its own content :  
Nor to the latest night, from earliest day,  
So lofty, so magnificent an act,  
E'er given by one to one on strict compact.  
More large it was in God, himself to give,  
For man's avail, his creature to exalt,  
Than even had he himself remitted fault ;  
And all the other ways for justice' sake  
Could not avail, had not the Son of God,  
In his humiliation, kissed the rod.  
And now to qualify thy every wish,  
Return I thus in some sort to unroll,  
That thou may'st see as well as I can tell.  
Thou'lt say, I see the air, I see the fire—  
The water and the earth, their compounds all  
Turn to corruption in a little fall,  
And these as they were all created things ;  
If that which I have said to thee be true,  
Such fell corruption they should never rue.  
The angels, brother ! and the land sincere  
In which we are, may too be called create,  
In their existence as they are complete ;

But then the elements which thou hast named,  
And also substances produced from them,  
Created virtue to inform them claim :  
For that material which they have was made ;  
Created, too, was that informing sense  
Of stars revolving round them far from hence.  
Through ray and motion of the sacred lights,  
The life of every brute, of every plant,  
Draws from complexion powerful what they want ;  
But this our life immediate love inspires,  
Highest of all, enamours it with awe  
Of its own self, an inward secret law.  
From hence, besides, you may with reason draw  
Your resurrection, if you think again  
How human flesh was first created then  
When our first parents were together made.

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## CANTO VIII.

IN its peril, the world had once believed  
That the fair Cyprian's epicycle three  
Irradiated the foolish love we see ;  
Wherefore, not her alone they honoured :  
With sacrifice, with votive shouts above,  
The ancient race their ancient errors prove ;  
Dione honoured, youthful Cupid, too :  
That for her mother, for her offspring this,  
Who lay in Dido's bosom, felt her kiss.  
From her from whence I borrow thus my strain

They took the name of that attractive star,  
The sun looks back to, or beholds before.  
Unconscious then that I had climbed to it ;  
But that I was within, enough to prove  
The beauty added to my lady love,  
And like as in the flame a spark is seen,  
And in the voice a voice can be discerned—  
When one is firm, one parting has returned—  
I saw within that light lamps also burn,  
Moving in circles more or less direct,  
Proportioned to the mode of their aspect.  
From the cold cloud the winds that come so fast,  
Congealed or not, that make such rapid haste,  
Had seemed to linger, tardier had passed  
Beside those lights divine beheld by us,  
Advancing, leave the circle of their train,  
Already compassed by the Seraphin.  
In rear of those who in the front appeared,  
Hosanna sounded such that, ever since,  
My soul desires again to know it once.  
The one drew nearer than the rest to us ;  
Began alone—" All we are ready here  
To do thee pleasure, which we all desire.  
We move with principalities divine.  
Why should your former strain in silence hush—  
' O ye ! whose sense conducts the high third heaven ?'  
We are so full of love, our highest zest,  
As much to please thee as to take our rest !"  
After that, mine eyes with reverence offered  
To lady were, and every doubt to cure,  
Herself had made them satisfied and sure.

I turned me towards the light that promised fair,  
“And who art thou?” my voice proclaimed aloud,  
With deep affection, which my accents showed.  
Oh how great, and what, increasing far,  
The cheerfulness that seemed to spring of new,  
As I addressed it when it met my view.  
So done, it said—“The world possessed me once;  
It was not long, and had the space been more,  
Much ill had been escaped that now is o’er.  
It is my joy that hides me from thy gaze,  
Which radiates round me, hides me in its wheels,  
Like animal whose silk its form conceals.  
Enough you loved me, and had drawn from thence.  
Had I continued good, I would have shown  
More fruits of love than green leaves for my own.  
This left bank, which the Rhone, when mingling, laved  
With Sorga’s waters, as it downward poured,  
Expected once that I should be its lord;  
And that Ausonian horn, whose boroughs rise  
Where Bari, Gaeta, and Crotona be,  
From where the Trento, Verde, seek the sea.  
Refulgent, too, upon my brow the crown,  
Of land the Danube irrigates afar,  
When past the boundaries of Tedeschian shore.  
And fair Trinacria, whose brow grows dark  
Above Pachin Pelorus, and the gulf,  
Disturbed by Eurys, lashes up itself—  
Not from Typhœus’ throes, but sulphury cloud—  
Expected had its race of royal kings  
To come through me from Charles’ and Rodolph’s wings.  
If evil rule, which stirs the subjects’ minds,

Within Palermo, had not raised the cry  
Which echoed there so long—oh fie ! oh fie !  
And had my brother but perceived and seen  
The avaricious Catalonian need,  
He would have 'scaped it with a right good heed.  
And surely there was sad and urgent need  
For him, or other, to take heed and mark,  
Lest they should burden an o'erladen bark.  
His nature large, which to penurious turned,  
But little aid required of those whose care  
Is to lock up in chest, and pine, and spare.”  
“And hence it is, I think, the exalted joy  
Thy speech infuses in me, my dear lord,  
The source and end of good can well accord ;  
As seen by thee, can I too see it clear,  
More grateful thus with fresher love renewed,  
Because I mark it when I look to God.  
You've made me glad : now make my senses clear ;  
Remove the doubt your words to me must bring,  
How from the sweet the bitter thus can spring ?”  
Thus I to him. And he to me—“Could I  
Unfold a truth, the thing you ask from me  
Should show its face, which now is turned from thee.  
The Good with which the kingdom that you climb  
Is all content, its essence virtue takes,  
Its providence in these great bodies makes ;  
And those provisions, which their natures gain,  
Imbibe their value from the perfect mind,  
And have their safety with their union joined.  
Whatever missile from this bowshot flies  
Commissioned falls, and at its destined end,

As to opposing butt the arrows tend.  
If 'twere not so in heaven you journey through,  
What wild creations for effects would teem !  
Instead of works would broken ruins seem.  
This could not be, if intellects which rule  
And move those stars had not awanting been ;  
The first want is, that no perfection 's seen.  
Would you this truth to thee were clearer made ? ”  
And I—“ Not yet. Impossible, I see,  
That nature in her task fatigued should be.”  
And he continued—“ Would it then be worse  
For man on earth, if not of social kind ? ”  
“ Yes,” I replied ; “ a reason you will find : ”  
And could it be, if those who live below  
Were not of diverse states and offices ?  
No ; if the precepts of thy master please.”  
Thus went he on, deducing step from step,  
And then concluded : “ Diverse, thus it suits,  
Of all your actions needs must be the roots.  
Thus one is Solon, one is Xerxes born,  
And one Melchisedec ; another him  
Whose failing flight had left his son to swim.  
Thus nature circulates, which is the seal  
To mortal wax, does well her work, but ne'er  
Distinguishes between the coarse and fair.  
Disparted thus is Esau from the seed  
Of Jacob ; and 'tis thus Quirinus bears  
So low a lineage that he springs from Mars.  
Nature would generate, and never swerve  
In likeness from the generating sire,  
If conquering Providence did not inspire.

What was behind thee late is now before :  
That thou may'st know that I delight in thee,  
I wish thee to wear this corollary.  
Nature, if fortune should at discord prove,  
Like any other germinating seed,  
Out of its element makes ill proceed.  
And if that world below would work like her  
—Like Nature's self—and such foundation lay,  
A better race her footsteps would obey.  
But to religion you distort the man,  
Though born to gird the sword upon his thigh ;  
Make king of him who talks with fluency :  
Your track has therefore wandered from the way."

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## CANTO IX.

CLEMENZA fair ! thy Charles dispelled my doubt,  
And then he told of every treacherous wile  
His seed would suffer on their native soil.  
"Be silent, though," he said, "and let the years  
Roll on. I may not tell, but due reward  
Shall follow soon on their injustice hard."  
And now the figure of that sacred light  
Was toward the sun, replenished at the blaze,  
Such universal good that love obeys.  
Ah, souls deceivable !—ah, impious things !  
Regardless turning, as perversion leads,  
To vanity the temples of your heads.  
And, lo ! another of those splendours came

To meet me ; showed its eagerness to please  
By the clear shining of the outward rays.  
The eyes of Beatrice, which were enchained  
On me, as if they gave their dear assent,  
With my desire appeared full well content.  
“ Ah ! to my wish impart a recompense,  
Blest spirit ! ” said I, “ and confirm the proof,  
That I reflect my thoughts on thee, aloof.”  
And then the light, that still was new to me,  
From out the depth in which it sang at first,  
Followed, like one in cheerful kindness nursed :  
“ In that, the portion of degenerate land  
Of Italy, ’tween Rialto and the source  
Where Brenta and Piava leave their nurse,  
A hill ascends, not eminent nor high ;  
’Twas at that place from whence a firebrand rolled,  
That all the country’s shrivelled leaves unfold.  
From that one root myself and it were born :  
Amizza was I called ; and here I shine,  
Because before this radiance I decline.  
But yet all joyfully I bear my lot,  
And its occasion grieves not me at all :  
Your vulgar crowd, repining, would recall.  
From this resplendent and this precious gem,  
The nearest to me in our native skies,  
A mighty fame will gather ere it dies ;  
This hundredth yet will grow five hundredth year.  
And see and mark if to excel be praise,  
When such a fame the second life conveys.  
Not their opinion now, the present crowd  
That Tagliamento and th’ Adige enclose,



Though beaten, yet which no repentance shows.  
Soon comes the day when Padua, at the marsh,  
Will change the waters which Vicenza wash,  
And teach their duty, and the people lash.  
And where the Sile joins Cagnano's stream,  
He lords it so, and goes with lofty head,  
For whom the web is e'en already spread ;  
And weep will Feltro then her shepherd's fault—  
Her impious shepherd, whose deserts may lower,  
And frown unequalled in the dungeon-tower.  
Too large would be the vessel to receive  
In its concavity Ferrara's blood—  
And weary he who gave 't in measure good—  
This courteous priest has shed to prove his zeal,  
To show his colours in his native land,  
And act conformity to their command.  
Above are mirrors, you will call them thrones,  
From whence the God of justice shines on us ;  
So that our words in honesty seem less.”  
Here ceased, and looked as if she meant to go  
Another time into the former wheel,  
From which the light reflected, to reveal  
The other joy already marked by me.  
A wondrous thing performed within my sight :  
Like a fine ruby, where the sun may light,  
From joy's excess refulgence new acquired ;  
As here we smile, and as, alas ! below,  
The outward shadow must attend on woe.  
“ God sees all ; thy sight, too, enlightens he,”  
I said, “ thou blessed spirit ! so that none,  
No will of His can be to thee unknown ;

And hence it is thy voice, that heaven transcends,  
Is ever with the song of blessed fires—  
Those six-winged creatures in their heavenly choirs.  
But still unsatisfied my wishes are.  
I had not lingered in the answering tone,  
Did I but know, as I to thee am known.”  
“The greater valley where the waters spread,”  
’Twas thus she spoke, “beyond the mighty sea,  
Which round the earth like garland seems to be ;  
Betwixt opposing shores, against the sun  
Extends so far, that the meridian line  
Is where the horizon’s bounds before incline.  
I was a native of that valley’s shore,  
Where the short route of Ebro Makra sees  
The Tuscan parted from the Genoese.  
To setting sun as ’twere, and yet to east,  
Buggea sits, the land where I was born,  
Whose blood ere yet has made its seaport warm.  
Folco that nation called me ; to that race  
My name was known ; and underneath that sky,  
By me imprinted, as by it was I.  
No greater fire in Belus’ daughter burned,  
Sichæus injuring, and Creusa’s shade,  
Than mine, when first my cheek the down betrayed ;  
When Rhodope Demophoon beguiled ;  
Nor yet Alcides, when his breast disclosed  
The young Iole in his heart enclosed.  
Nor yet repent we here, but laugh the time—  
Not for the sin, no more assaulting soul,  
But for the goodness that provides for all.  
Here we behold it in th’ adorning arts,

Producing such effects ; the good discern,  
From world above to world below return.  
But since thy restless wishes still o'erflow,  
Bear thee along, which in this sphere sprung up,  
Still to go on seems better than to stop.  
You wish to know, then, who inhabits light  
That, close beside me, sparkles like the beam  
Of sun on water of transparent stream.  
Then know, that tranquil Rahab enters here,  
Joined to our order in the rank assigned ;  
With highest seal, to mark that rank, is signed.  
Up to this heaven, at which the shadow stops  
Thrown by your world, the first of all the souls  
Triumphant of the cross this sphere unrolls.  
And well it suited that the palm should tell,  
Within the bounds of heaven, of victory calm,  
Won by the one and by the other palm ;  
Since once she favoured Joshua's early fame,  
The first-won trophies of the Holy Land,  
That memory of the Pope can scarce command.  
Thy city, too, the plant of him who turned  
His back the first upon his Maker so,  
And from whose envy such a plant did grow,  
Produced and spread the ill-conditioned flower,  
Which made but wanderers of the sheep and lambs,  
And of the shepherd made a wolf that crams.  
For this the gospel and the doctors great  
Relinquished are ; decretals in their stead  
Are studied, and their ample margin read.  
Intent on this, the Popes and Cardinals  
In thought ne'er go to visit Nazareth,

Where Gabriel his wings once opened hath.  
But yet the Vatican, and parts elect  
In Rome, which were the ancient cemetery  
Of Peter's soldiers, Roman soldiery,  
Will soon be free from church adultery."

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C A N T O   X.

BEHOLDING then his Son, and with the love  
The one the other constantly puts forth,  
The first and the unutterable Worth,  
Makes what the mind or eye can figure fair,  
With order such that no observer can  
Perceive, and relish not the Maker's plan.  
Upraise, then, reader ! to the lofty wheels  
Thy view, direct to that important part  
Across each other where the motions dart :  
Begin to wander through the works on high,  
Of such a Master, whose intrinsic love  
Ne'er leaves the workmanship his hands may prove.  
Behold from thence oblique the curve branch off  
That bears the planets in their orbit whirled,  
To meet the call of this desiring world.  
And were the line inflected not on high,  
What heavenly influence would perish then,  
And every power be lost to human ken !  
Or swerving from direct, or more or less,  
Enough below of failure would ensue—  
Enough above would worldly order rue.

Now, reader ! rest upon thy bench, reflect,  
And taste a little of the future joy ;  
To make thee happy, should fatigues annoy,  
I have placed it before thee, feed thyself :  
For all my thoughts must now untwist to bow,  
To search the subject I desire to know.  
The mighty minister of nature's power—  
Imprints the world with virtue of the heaven,  
And measures time from morning until even—  
With that same part which we received above,  
Combined, was rolling through the spiral lines,  
Where every hour in fleeter space declines.  
With him was I, unheeding as we climb—  
Regardless, like a man upon the brink,  
Who finds it coming ere there's time to think.  
And Beatrice, who can so well proceed  
From good to better, with that rapid speed,  
That time itself the action cannot heed,  
How bright, how shining in herself must be !  
That which was within the sun, when entered  
Not with colour but with light was cinctured !  
For genius, art, experience, I called ;  
Not such my words could e'er imagined be—  
But yet believed that I desired to see.  
And if our fancies should be left behind  
At such a height, yet marvel would be none,  
For never eye before o'ertopped the sun :  
The fourth family of the Sire on high,  
Who still delights to show His love in one,  
In breathing Spirit and begotten Son.  
And Beatrice began—" Now should you thank—

Return your grateful thanks to th' angels' Sun,  
Who by his grace, thus seen, hath led thee on."  
No mortal heart was ever more alert,  
With more devotion full for thanks to God,  
With all its will and all its zeal endowed,  
As at those words of hers was I inclined :  
So much was all my love intent on Him,  
That Beatrice oblivion might seem.  
Nor that displeased her, for at that she smiled,  
That with the splendour of her laughing eyes  
From settled mind divided thoughts arise.  
I saw more living, conquering lightnings shine,  
Around us make themselves a brilliant crown,  
Brilliant to see, but sweeter far in tone.  
Oft have we seen Latona's daughter thus,  
So cinctured, when the air, impregnate grown,  
Retains the thread of which it makes her zone.  
In heavenly courts, from whence I now return,  
Are many jewels found, too dear and fair  
To leave their kingdom, or to sojourn here :  
Of such the song of those resplendent lights ;  
If winged spirit cannot soar so high,  
The mute must tell thee, and the dumb reply :  
Continuing then to sing, those burning suns  
Thrice circled round us, and approached their goals,  
Like nearer stars around the steadfast poles ;  
And seemed like ladies not released from dance,  
Who stay in silence till they catch the notes,  
And the new music to their footsteps floats.  
And from within perceived I one commence—  
" When ray of grace from whence true love's inflamed,

By loving more, is afterwards proclaimed  
And multiplied, in this illumines so far  
That it conducts thee to that upper scale,  
Whence he who sinks to climb can never fail :  
Who from this phial should deny thee wine  
To quench thy thirst, like stream constrained should be  
To seek another outlet than the sea.  
You wish to know what plants are these whose flower  
Enwreaths the garland of the lady fair,  
Who now avails thee in celestial air.  
From out that sacred flock a lamb was I,  
Once led by Dominick, along the path  
In health and ease, without the swelling wrath.  
The nearest this, that's close to my right hand,  
My brother, master was : Albert this was  
Of Cologne ; Thomas I, of Aquinas :—  
If all the rest you wish to ascertain,  
Let then your sight accompany my speech,  
And circle round the wreath within your reach.  
This flaming light is issuing from the smile  
Of Gratian ; both the forums are at peace,  
And such that e'en in Paradise might please.  
The other nearest, who adorns our choir,  
That Peter was who, with the widow's mite,  
Presented holy church he would requite.  
The fifth light is the fairest of us all,  
And breathes of such a love, that all the world  
Is fain to have his destiny unfurled.  
Within there is a light that's so profound  
With knowledge stored, that, if the truth were known,  
Arose no second to dispute its throne.

Beside it view the taper's kindling light,  
Who in the flesh could penetrate through all  
The nature, ministry angelical.  
And in the other lesser light you trace  
That advocate of Christian temples, he  
Who aided St Augustine's ministry.  
And now, if you with eye of mind pursue,  
From light to light, the train my praises take,  
Already will the eighth your wonder wake.  
To see the whole of good within, enjoys  
That holy soul, that shows fallacious world  
To all to whom its accents have been whirled.  
The frame, from which 'twas chased, lies low beneath  
In Cieldauro—from the martyr's tomb,  
From exile, here it finds a peaceful home.  
See where that other flaming soul aspires,  
Of Isidore, of Bede, Ricardo—one  
In keen discernment who was more than man.  
That one, from whence thy glance returns to me,  
The light of spirit was whose failing breath  
Repined at lingering in the gates of death.  
The eternal light of Sigebert you see,  
Once reading, in the littered street of Seine,  
Invidious truths, too pungent, and too keen."  
And then, as strikes the bell that summons me,  
At hour at which the spouse of God will rise  
With matin vows, her bridegroom's sacrifice :  
When one and other part prolong and swell,  
Tin, tin ! they sound, with tuneful throat,  
That all the well-disposed will echo note.  
So looked mine eyes upon the glorious wheel



That rolls along ; and answers voice to voice,  
So tempered, and with sweetness such imbued,  
Mid lasting joy alone 'tis understood.

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## CANTO XI.

O CARE insensate thus of mortal men !  
How faulty syllogisms to which they bow,  
Which make them beat their wings so far below.  
One follows edicts, aphorisms one  
Pursues ; and this the priesthood strives to gain ;  
And this to rule by force, and sophisms vain ;  
Another robbery ; civil business this ;  
And this, whom carnal, vain delights can please  
Fatigued ; and this abandoned to his ease—  
When I, at freedom from these anxious things,  
With Beatrice was raised aloft to heaven,  
And such a glorious reception given.  
When every one was turned again to point  
Of circle in the which he stood before,  
As in the candlestick the candle sure ;  
And I perceived, enshrined within that light,  
The one that spoke before, who, with a smile  
That made him more transparent, said the while—  
“ As with this ray I set myself on fire,  
Th’ eternal light regarding with my eyes,  
I apprehend thy thoughts, and trace their rise.  
In doubt, thou wouldst I should discern anew,  
In speech more open and extended, that

To thy perception it may be more flat,  
Where late I said of some 'in health and ease ;'  
And also where 'no second shall arise,'  
And this not less for some distinction cries.  
The Providence that governs all the world,  
With that deep counsel that o'ercomes, o'ersways,  
Created aspect which the depth surveys,  
That she may seek, and find her own delight,  
The spouse of Him who with loud cry hath wed,  
And made her willing with his blessed blood,  
Secure in love, and faithful more to him,  
His will he makes two principles obey,  
And here and there they serve to guide the way :  
In ardour one was so seraphic all ;  
On earth was one for wisdom found so bright,  
And beamed with splendour of cherubic light.  
I speak of one—the nature of the two  
I find, discoursing of the one alone,  
Since to one end the works of both go on.  
Between Tupino and the stream that falls  
From chosen hill, the choice of Saint Ubald,  
A fertile stripe hangs from the mountain's hold,  
From where Perugia feels the hot and cold,  
From the sun-gate : lamenting in the rear  
The heavy yoke of Gualdo and Nocere.  
'Twas from that side, and where the shelving steep  
Is most abrupt, a sun illumed the world,  
Like that whose beam from Ganges is unfurled ;  
And therefore let not him who speaks of it,  
Ascesi, call it—that would leave it short ;  
But Orient be the proper name of port.

Nor yet was far above his rising hour,  
When earth's cold breast at first relenting seems  
To draw some comfort from his heavenly beams.  
For such a lady, 'gainst his father's will,  
He wooed, to whom, like death, no mortal yet  
In youth and pleasure had unbarred the gate ;  
And then, in presence of the holy court,  
Before his father, bound himself to her :  
From day to day he found her lovelier :  
For she was taken from her former spouse—  
A thousand years and more, despised, obscure,  
And, till he came, from every suit secure.  
Nor yet availèd that, serene, unmoved,  
That voice beside Amyclas she could hear,  
At sound of which the world was filled with fear :  
Nor yet availèd that constancy so firm,  
When Mary stood beside, to mourn her loss,  
That climbed with Jesus to the bitter cross.  
But, not too closely to pursue my way,  
Francis and Poverty these lovers call,  
And this at large their style and title all.  
Their happy concord, and their joyful face,  
The love, the marvel, and the sweet regard,  
Had fruit in holy thoughts, their due reward,  
With such effect that venerable Bernard  
Unsandalled first, to follow peace so great—  
To run, though race seemed tardy to his feet.  
Oh, unknown riches ! oh, substantial good !  
Ægidius, then Sylvester, bares his feet  
Behind the bridegroom, if the bride permit.  
And then that father, and that master goes,

His lady following, and his family,  
Already corded with humility.  
Nor did low heart, or weak, depress his brow,  
That Pietro Bernardone was his sire,  
And in despite that mortals should admire ;  
But royally his rough and hard intent,  
To Innocent disclosing, to reveal,  
And gain from him his order's primal seal.  
And when th' impoverished race increased and grew,  
Behind his steps whose wondrous life were sung  
With better glory in celestial throng,  
With second crown endowed his holy wish  
Honorius gave, and through the Spirit breathed,  
And round their pastor's brows their virtues wreathed.  
And when from thirst of martyrdom, he stood  
In presence of the Sultan, he proclaimed  
His Saviour Christ, and all his followers named.  
And when he found conversion was but crude  
Amid that race, he turned, and not in vain,  
To find its fruit upon Italia's plain.  
On the bare rock, between the Arno and  
Teverne, with Christ's last seal the saint impressed—  
His aged limbs two years the wounds caressed.  
And he who destined him to so much good,  
Was pleased to take his follower on high,  
To find the crown he sought for in the sky.  
And to his brothers he, as to his heirs,  
His lady recommended, then most dear—  
Charged them in faith to love and to revere ;  
And from her bosom wished that soul should go—  
That famous soul returning to its rest,

Nor wished for other bier to bear his breast.  
Who think'st thou now was worthy to embark  
Partner with Peter, and to keep his course  
In the deep sea, against the tempest's force ?  
And such an one our Patriarch was, and he  
Who follows by the rule his order gave  
Will find him freighted with a cargo brave.  
The love of wages and new viands' taste,  
Hath made them hunger, that they wander wide ;  
Nor can they in their native walks abide :  
And still remoter as the flocks may stray,  
And wander wider from the shepherd's care,  
The fold receives them void of milk and bare.  
There are, indeed, of those who mischief fear,  
And to their shepherd cling ; but these so few,  
A little stuff their mantles would renew.  
Now, if my words are not too weak to reach—  
If thou hast marked them with attention all,  
And that which I have said your mind recall,  
In part thy wish will be content ere long :  
For thou shalt see the plant from which they split ;  
And see the discipline that needs must fit—  
'How fair is health without the pride of life.' ”

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## CANTO XII.

Soon as the blessed flame had raised for speech  
Its latest word, 'twas then the sacred mill  
Began around its measured orb to wheel ;

But had not yet revolved entirely round,  
Before another circle that enclosed,  
Motion to motion, song to song opposed—  
Song that o'ercomes as far our Muses' strain,  
Our Syrens' singing, with melodious throats,  
As the bright ray the faintest hue that floats.  
Such to the sight are, through the tender cloud,  
Two arches parallel, with colours like,  
When Juno's accents Iris' ears can strike,  
And when the outer's born from that within,  
(Thus Echo, voiceless, melted like the mist,  
For her fair lover robbed her of her rest.)  
And now the gazers, with prophetic awe,  
Behold the covenant God with Noah made,  
Of world no more to waters all betrayed.  
Thus sempiternal roses had festooned  
Their double garland round, on every side ;  
And thus the outer with the inner vied.  
When reel of three, festivity so great,  
The songs responsive, and the flaming band,  
Light answering light, and joyful, and bland,  
Even at a word, and at the instant stilled,  
(Just as the eyes are moved, at one desire  
Are quenched together, and renew their fire ;)  
From out the heart of one of novel lights  
A voice there came, attractive to the ear,  
That made me turn like needle to the star.  
Began—" The love that makes me beautiful  
Now leads me to discourse of other guide,  
With whom such good report of mine has vied.  
'Tis meet where one that there should other be :

Since in one service both of them unite,  
So blended should their glory shine aright.  
And Christ's battalions, whom it cost so dear  
To arm anew, behind the ensign moved  
With slow suspicious steps, in ranks reproved,  
When that Ruler, who for ever is on high,  
Provided for his force, in hazard then,  
By grace alone, and not desert of men.  
As has been said, his spouse he succoured here,  
With champions two, whose deeds, whose words, should make  
His wandering people to repentance take.  
Where on the Continent arises first  
Sweet zephyr, to disclose the new-sprung leaves  
Which Europe for her vernal robe receives;  
Not very far from where the billows dash,  
Beyond whose swell, from his impetuous course,  
The sun at times is wont to hide his force,  
Sits Callaroga, fair and fortunate,  
Beneath protection of the mighty shield  
In which the subject lion fills the field.  
Within that spot was born the lover true  
Of Christian faith, the saint, the wrestler strong—  
Whose love to friends, whose dread to foes belong.  
And as when first create he was replete  
With living virtue, and the graces' bloom,  
A prophet almost from his mother's womb.  
And when the sponsal rites were made complete  
At sacred fount, betwixt himself and faith,  
And mutual safety was the pledge till death,  
The lady who would promise in his name,  
To her in sleep a wondrous fruit appears,

That was from him to issue, and his heirs.  
And that he might be as he was in sooth,  
From that the Spirit moved her him to name,  
With some possessive of his Lord the same.  
Dominic they called him, of whom I speak  
As of a fellow-labourer with Christ—  
For garden chosen, to his service prest.  
Well might he seem a messenger and friend  
Of his! for unreserving love embraced  
The first of lessons ever given by Christ.  
Whom silent oft, upon the earth reclined,  
His nurse returning found, when she might miss,  
As if he murmured—‘I am come for this.’  
O happy father! and Felice called;  
O mother gracious! and Giovanna named—  
If Grace interpreted, as it is famed.  
Not for the world, for which they sweat and moil  
Where Ostiense leads, and Thaddeus calls,  
But for the manna from the heaven which falls,  
Great doctor he in little time became;  
And set himself to go the vineyard round,  
That blanches fast if no vine-dresser’s found.  
And from that seat (no more, as once, benign  
To feed the blameless poor—its own fault not,  
But his who has the seat, and wrongly got)  
No dispensation twice or thrice he craved,  
Nor fortune sought of vacant benefice,  
Nor tenths, that might for God’s own poor suffice;  
But freedom ’gainst an erring world to fight  
In favour of the seed from which have sprung  
The four-and-twenty plants of which we’ve sung.



Then with his doctrine and his zeal combined  
With apostolic office moved in course,  
Like torrent issuing from a lofty source ;  
And struck upon heretic stems so hard,  
The lively shock appeared the force to meet,  
And stronger grew as was resistance great.  
From him have diverse rivulets been ta'en,  
The garden Catholic to water well,  
And make the branches give a pleasant smell.  
If such one wheel of chariot was framed,  
In which the holy church was fortified,  
And conquered in the plain on every side,  
Well might the other manifestly show  
Its excellence, which Thomas Aquinas,  
Before I came, to tell so courteous was.  
And now the orbit which the highest part  
Of its circumference made, desertion sees,  
And mould has gathered on the vintage lees.  
His family, once wont to move direct  
Their footsteps in his track, has turned so far,  
Retreating now where forward once before.  
And soon will it behold the harvest come  
Of evil crop, when once the unhappy tares  
Lament the loss of what their neighbour shares.  
I do not doubt that he who, leaf by leaf,  
Should search our volume, yet might find a page,  
With 'Such am I as was the former age.'  
Not Casale such, nor Aquasparta's rule—  
By them who handle e'er its written text,  
By one drawn closer, and by one relaxed.  
Buonaventura's life I am, and come

From Bagnoregio ; who, in office great,  
To no sinister end e'er turned my feet.  
Illuminato and Agostin here,  
The first of the bare-footed and the poor,  
Who found God's friendship in the cord endure :  
Ugo da Sanvittore here ; with him  
Is Pietro Mangiadore ; and from Spain,  
Pietro, with twelve volumes in his train ;  
Nathan the prophet ; Metropolitan  
Chrysostom ; and Anselmo ; and Donato,  
To infant arts who put his hand with awe.  
Rubano's here ; and, shining at my side,  
Calabria's abbot, Giovacchino stands,  
Prophetic spirit as his dower commands.  
To emulate the fame of worthy peer,  
Moved brilliant courtesy of Thomas meet,  
The Latin ardour and the words discreet,  
And moved with me this company to greet."

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## CANTO XIII.

LET him imagine, who would understand,  
That which I saw, (and all its power retain,  
While yet I speak, like rock that may remain)  
Fifteen stars, that, in their varying bound,  
Observe the heaven in all its blue serene,  
And conquer every track of air that 's seen :  
Imagine then the chariot in the breast

Of heaven, and, visible both night and day,  
Which wheels around the axle in its way :  
Imagine, too, the stars at mouth of horn,  
Commencing at the point that 's near the pole,  
Round which the wheel appears the first to roll,  
Had made themselves two signs in all in heaven—  
As Ariadne, Minos' daughter, made,  
When the cold chill of death her heart o'erswayed ;  
And one within the other held its rays,  
Revolving each to different point around,  
One motion from, one to the right was found :  
And he shall have, as 'twere, the shadow thus  
Of constellation true of double dance,  
In two directions round the point at once ;  
For from our usage it is so remote,  
That not Chiana, in its motion dull,  
Is more unlike the swiftest heavens that roll.  
Nor Bacchus there, nor Pæan is't they sing :  
Three Persons in one nature, all divine,  
And one where that and human both combine.  
Revolved they, sang they, filled their measures all—  
The sacred lights attending on us there,  
And happier made by every courteous care.  
And then, amid according beings, broke  
The silence light by which the tale was told,  
The wondrous life of man of God unrolled ;  
And said—" When once one ear of corn is thrashed,  
And when the grain's already in the barn,  
Love bids me try to beat out other corn.  
Thou know'st that in the breast, whence rib was ta'en  
To form the lovely cheek, whose palate vile

Once cost the world itself and all its smile ;  
And in the breast which was pierced through by spear,  
Before and after satisfaction made,  
All sins o'erbalanced which our nature swayed :  
Whatever light in human nature 's found,  
Or can be there, must all have been inbred  
By heavenly worth, which one and other made.  
And should you wonder at my words above,  
When telling that no second was supposed  
In good that in the fifth light was enclosed.  
Thine eyes now open to reply I give,  
And then my words and thy belief, at large,  
Meet in the truth, like centre in the targe.  
Both that which dies, and that which cannot die,  
Are nothing but the splendour of the thought  
By the eternal Love at first begot ;  
The vivid light that issues from the flame,  
Which ne'er can part, nor ever disunite  
From him, nor from the love that's tripartite.  
His goodness makes it radiate more combined,  
Mirrored, as 'twere, in substances afresh,  
And ever one—and no mutation wish.  
From thence descending to their limits last,  
From act to act becoming low and lower,  
Till brief contingencies comprise its power.  
By these contingencies I understand  
Things generated, which the seeds produce,  
Or, without seed, the rolling heavens for use.  
Their clay and His creating plastic hand  
Are not at one, and hence the ideal sign  
Has more or less of impress that 's divine ;

And hence it happens in the self-same tree,  
A second species—worse, or better fruit ;  
And differing genius, thus your birth to suit ;  
Else had the clay been beaten out too fine,  
And heaven's constraining influence supreme,  
The seal complete in everything would seem :  
But nature ever in the largeness fails,  
Like artist at his work experienced—still  
The trembling hand will rob the work of skill.  
And thus if fervid love at first dispose  
The pristine virtue, in its prospect clear,  
Then all perfection may be looked for here.  
So formed was once, and dignified the earth,  
And each perfection animal obeyed,  
And thus the Virgin after pregnant made ;  
And so that thy opinion I commend,  
No more that human nature can disclose  
Itself, as once it did in both of those.  
And now, should I advance no further on,  
' Then tell me how he never had a peer ? '  
Your words might thus, at least, address mine ear.  
That it appear, appears not now at all,  
Think who he was, the motive of his prayer,  
(When told to ask,) and find his wishes there.  
I have not spoken, that you should not see  
The royal one, who made request for sense,  
That he might be sufficient king from thence ;  
Nor yet to ask of essences above,  
Who move the sphere ; nor if necessity  
Can be itself, though with contingency ;  
Nor yet to fathom what first motion was ;

Or if triangle, from mid circle made,  
Without rectangle could be over had.  
Wherefore, know that I tell thee ; and this note,  
The regal prudence and th' unequalled sight,  
At which intent must strive to strike aright ;  
If to the Risen you direct your eyes,  
You soon will see it hath respect alone  
To kings, which are many—good almost none.  
With this distinction, you may take my words ;  
This may agree with what you think aright  
Of Sire ; and of all nations 'The Delight.'  
Let this henceforth be lead unto thy feet,  
To make thee move slow, like a weary man,  
Both to the Yea and Nay, as far 's you can :  
For he among the fools is low enough,  
Without distinction, who affirms, denies,  
Where one and where the other question lies.  
It happens, too, that oftentimes incline  
Opinions current to the falser side,  
And intellect is by affection tied.  
How much in vain he parted from the shore !  
For he will not return as he set out,  
Who angles for the truth, and skill has not.  
Of this the proofs are open in the world :  
Parmenides, Melisso, Bresso, more,  
Who went, and yet they knew not to what shore.  
So did Sabellio, Arius, and those fools,  
The Scripture scimitars, the mirrors bright,  
Reflecting wrong, distorting what was right.  
Let not the people be too swift to judge,  
Like one who looks upon the springing blade,

As if the harvest were already made.  
For I have seen, the whole of winter long,  
The thorn look rude and rough, and bare at top,  
And after show the rose's reddening cup ;  
And seen the bark, already swift direct  
Across the sea, in all its journey's way,  
Perish at last when entering in the bay.  
Let not Nun Bertha and Saint Martin try,  
Seeing one offer, and another steal,  
The counsel of the heaven from that to tell :  
For this may rise again, and that may fall."

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## CANTO XIV.

FROM centre to the circle, and circle  
To the centre, moves water round the vase,  
Just as percussion inward, outward, sways.  
A sudden thought there came into my mind,  
That which I say, as soon as accents cease,  
Of glorious life of Thomas Aquinas.  
From that similitude which then arose  
Betwixt his speech and that of Beatrice,  
Who began, and, pleased, renewal tries—  
"Some channel make, although he should not tell,  
Neither by voice nor yet by any thought,  
The way to other truth to reach the root.  
Tell him if yet the light, which blooms around  
Your substance, shall unwavering dwell with you,  
Eternally as now no changes rue :

When once reformed and visible ye are ;  
Or will not such the sense of seeing mar ? ”  
As when they're struck with greater joy, and drawn  
Along at moment when they thread the round,  
They shout aloud, and with new spirit bound ;  
Thus at that prayer, all promptly and devout,  
The sacred circles beamed with joy anew,  
And turned with gladdened note, and met the view :  
He that laments because that here we die,  
To live in yonder sphere, ne'er saw such hour,  
Nor felt the freshness of th' eternal shower.  
Him, one, and two, and three, who ever lives,  
Reigns ever in the three, and two, and one—  
Boundless himself, and bounding every one !  
Three times was sung by every spirit there :  
With such melodious voice they all took part,  
Enough to recompense a high desert.  
And then I heard, from out more heavenly light  
Of lesser circle, issue modest voice,  
Like that the angel's once to Mary was ;  
And it replied—" Long as the festal day  
Of Paradise, so long our love shall last,  
And radiate round the kingly wedding vest ;  
Its clearness such as is its ardour bright ;  
Its ardour as the vision ; that so great  
As grace it has above its native state.  
When with the glorious and holy flesh  
We're clothed upon, and yet more gracious then,  
Because a robe that's so entire for men :  
And thus enlarging, as the gift of Him,  
Gratuitous of light, the good supreme,—



Light which enables us to see his beam :  
And hence it seems that vision must increase,  
The ardour grow which is inflamed by that,  
And grow the ray which is produced from it.  
But as the carbon, which gives out the flame,  
Shines with a living and surpassing white,  
That its appearance vindicates its right,  
So shall this splendour which surrounds us now,  
Be conquered by the appearance of the flesh,  
Though now all covered with the earth that's fresh.  
Nor shall such light be able to o'erpower  
Our organs then, which will be made so strong  
For all that can delight us well and long."  
So sudden they appeared to me, and quick,  
And one and other choir to say "Amen,"  
Their dead bodies seemed to wish again ;  
Not for themselves—perchance their mothers dear,  
Their fathers, and each other much-loved name,  
Before their change to sempiternal flame.  
And lo ! around appeared a brighter clear,  
Born from the light already in the sky,  
As, when th' horizon's hues with morning vie,—  
As when the earliest hour of evening's out,  
Across the heaven new things begin t' appear,  
So that they seem, and now are scarcely clear ;  
Before me thus new substances begin  
T' appear ; a wider circle to disclose,  
Beyond the two of lesser orbit rose.  
O real sparkling of the breath of heaven !  
What sudden and what candid lustre shone  
Upon mine eyes, which with the sight were gone !

But Beatrice so beautiful had smiled,  
That mid the other lights that one alone  
Escaped pursuit, and left my sight unknown ;  
Their virtue here had reassumed mine eyes,  
And lifted up myself—translated, saw,  
With Beatrice, to loftier peace with awe.  
I well perceived that I was risen higher  
By glowing smile that shone within the star,  
Which seemed to me of redder lustre far.  
With all my heart, and with that language tongue,  
To God I offered sacrifice and praise,  
Such as belonged to such a novel grace.  
And from my breast was not exhausted yet  
The ardour of the sacrifice I knew,  
Auspicious and accepted as it flew,  
With such a radiance, and a reddening die ;  
Apparent splendour of two rays within—  
“ God of Sabaoth ! how thy garments shine ! ”  
As from the larger lesser lights distinct,  
Between the poles of world the Milky Way—  
T’ explore whose whiteness many wise essay—  
In constellation, in the depth profound  
Of Mars, those rays the venerable sign,  
Which makes four quadrants all conjoin in one.  
Here memory’s conquered by my genius’ power ;  
For in that radiant cross was shining Christ,  
And no example for the sign sufficed.  
He who takes up his cross, and follows Christ,  
Will now excuse me if the aim I’ve missed,  
When glimmering in the dawn he looks on Christ.  
From horn to horn, between the top and base,

The lights were moving, scintillating strong  
In their conjunction, as they passed along.  
Thus may we see, direct and twisted through,  
And swift and slow, and almost baffling sight,  
Minute molecu<sup>læ</sup>, both short and straight,  
Athwart the ray whose glittering edging laced,  
So oft the shadow which in art's defence  
The people place, and harvest skill from thence.  
And as the harp and viol, touched in tune  
With many chords, can make a pleasant chime,  
E'en to the ear which cannot note the time ;  
So from the lights that crossed my gazing eyes  
There gathered o'er the cross melodious song,  
That rapt me then, and baffled knowledge long.  
Yet could I mark it was of lofty praise ;  
" Arise " and " Conquer " to my ears there came,  
As one who hears, but cannot mark the same.  
But so enamoured with the strains I heard,  
Until that moment never aught retains  
My mind a prisoner in such pleasant chains.  
My speech, perchance, too hardy my appear,  
If one regard but those delightful eyes,  
To look on which would all desire suffice.  
But if adverting that those living seals  
Each beauty heighten as they rise more high—  
Nor yet to them had I advanced mine eye—  
He may excuse th' accusing charge I make  
For my excuse, and wish to say what's true :  
That high delight has here escaped our view—  
The clearer still the higher that we flew.

## CANTO XV.

BENIGN good-will, in which is found dissolved  
That love for ever which directly breathes,  
As in the bad cupidity still seethes,  
To silence put the music of the lyre,  
And wrapped the sacred chords in quiet's laws,  
Which the right hand of heaven unwinds and draws.  
And how should they be deaf to justice' call—  
These substances, which wished to give me will  
To pray, and, that I might, kept silence still ?  
And well may he lament, and find no end,  
Who, for the love of what is not to last,  
Can lose that love which sticks for ever fast.  
As through the tranquil and the pure serene,  
Careers a moment such a meteor far,  
Attracting eyes before at rest that were—  
And might appear a star that shifted place,  
But that the quarter whence it was inflamed  
Has lost no light, and that no new is claimed—  
So from the horn that on the dexter bends,  
A star ran down to join the feet of cross,  
Whose constellation living lights engross ;  
Yet from its ribbon not a gem was gone :  
But through the radiant band athwart it hailed,  
And seemed like fire in alabaster veiled.  
So more and more stretched forth Anchises' form,  
(If faith be due unto the mighty muse,)  
When in Elysian fields his son he views :

“ O blood of mine ! exceeding over all  
Abundant grace of God ! to thee, e’en twice,  
Heaven’s gate right open on its hinges flies ! ”  
So spake this light, and so I turned to him,  
And then bent back mine eyes to lady there—  
On every side I looked with stupid air.  
Within her eyes’ bright fire there played a smile  
So sweet, I thought that I had reached the well  
Whence grace itself, and Paradise, distil.  
Then, pleasant to the ear and to the sight,  
The Spirit added to the former sound  
Things that I knew not, they were so profound.  
Nor yet from choice were they obscured to me,  
But through necessity—his high conceit  
Beyond their mark, and less for mortals meet.  
And when affection’s ardent bow its string  
Relaxed, that speech descended to the plain,  
That human intellect might mark again.  
The first thing then was understood by me :  
“ O blessed be thou ! blessed Three in One !  
Thyself so gracious to my seed hast shown.”  
Then followed—“ Grateful hunger, long to me  
Of the great volume searching to the root,  
Whose page, or white or brown, is never mute.  
Thou hast removed, my son ! within this light  
In which I speak to thee : thanks to her care,  
Whose plumes have clad thee for the upper air.  
Thou think’st thy thoughts are open unto me,  
From Him that’s first, as numbers, in our creed,  
Must, if we think, from unity proceed ;  
And therefore why askest not who am I,

And why I seem more joyous unto thee,  
Than any other of this company.  
You think the truth: the lesser and the great,  
Within this life, upon that mirror look,  
Where, e'en before you think, your thoughts we brook.  
But that the sacred love in which I watch,  
With ceaseless gaze, which makes me long for more,  
With sweet desire, its blessing may restore,  
Even with thy voice, secure, and bold, and gay,  
Thy wishes utter; sound thy whole desire—  
To which the answer comes that you require.”  
I turned to Beatrice, who heard my thought  
Before I spoke, and smiled a sweet assent—  
Which gave new wings to make my will content.  
So I began—“Affection, wisdom, find  
The first equality they had in you,  
Which in one measure every one can view:  
And since the sun illumines both, and burns  
With heat and light, which so much equal are,  
That e'en similitude's more distant far.  
But then the will, the means, in mortals are—  
For reasons clear and manifest to you—  
Not fledged alike for soaring out of view:  
Hence inequality a mortal feels.  
I cannot, as I would, return the while  
A filial greeting to paternal smile!  
But living topaz! let me ask of thee,  
Who'rt jewelled thus with such a precious gem,  
To make me happy with your mentioned name?”  
“O leaf of mine! in whom I take delight,  
Expected long, I am thy native root:”

So he began to grant my purposed suit.  
And added—"He from whom thy surname comes,  
And who a hundred years and more around  
The mountain, and its cornice' border, wound,  
My son was he, and was thy great-grandsire ;  
And well it suits that his prolonged fatigue  
Thou shouldst abridge with thy works, and their league.  
Florence, within her circle old antique,  
Which calls her still at hour of three and noon,  
Remained in peace, chaste, sober as the moon :  
No bracelet, nor no coronet, had she ;  
Nor ladies' ornaments, nor cinctures there,  
To look at, rather than the person fair.  
The birth of daughter yet caused no alarm  
To father, lest the age and dower should mount,  
On either side, beyond a just account.  
No houses empty of the family—  
No Sardanapalus yet had joined the throng,  
To show what in a chamber can be done.  
Nor Montemalo conquered was as yet,  
By Uccellatojo vanquished, whose descent  
Shall one day conquer, like its first ascent.  
I saw Bellincion Berti walk attired  
In buff, with clasp of bone—the mirror leave  
His lady, nor with blush the eye deceive :  
And saw the sons of Nerli, Vecchio, each  
In jerkins rough—content could not relax ;  
The ladies at the distaff and the flax.  
O people fortunate ! and each one sure  
Of his own sepulture : no widowed wife,  
For France deserted, led a lonely life.



One watched the cradle through the wakeful night,  
Consoling used the old and self-same phrase  
That hushed their father's, mother's, early days :  
The other drew the long locks from the reel,  
And told her family the ancient tales,  
Where Troy, and Fesole, and Rome prevails.  
A Cianghella, Lupo Salterello,  
Had then been held a marvel and a fame,  
As Cincinnatus or Cornelia's name.  
In so composed and such a sober state,  
So lived the citizens ; and faithful, true,  
The city's shelter where the people grew,  
There Mary gave me, when invoked aloud.  
In old baptistery, the light I saw,  
Both Christian was and Cacciaguida ;  
My brothers—Moronto, Eliseo.  
My lady came from valley of the Po,  
And hence thy surname, Alighieri, know.  
I followed then the Emperor Conrad,  
Who girt me after with the knightly sword—  
To such a rank was raised as his reward.  
To follow him I went against that law  
Of wickedness, your shepherd's fault, has raised  
That people who usurp your rights and waste.  
And there was I, by that degenerate race,  
Released, unloosed from this fallacious world,  
Whose love has many a soul to vileness whirled ;  
And thus to martyrdom and peace was hurled.”



## CANTO XVI.

O POOR nobility of blood of ours !  
Thou makest the people glory upon earth,  
Where each affection has a languid birth :  
I cannot marvel, then, that in that clime  
Where appetite is never drawn aside—  
In heaven, I say, I glory in thy tide.  
What art thou but a cloak that's shortened soon ?  
Unless thy limits lengthened day to day,  
Time with his shears will clip thee all away.  
With " You," which Rome first suffered in her speech—  
Although not long continuing in the mode—  
My words I recommenced, pursued the road.  
And Beatrice, who was a space apart,  
Smiled to encourage me ; 'twas like that cough,  
To tell Ginevra it was not enough.  
" You are my father," I began ; " you give  
Me boldness to speak out my mind to thee :  
You raise me higher, in my urgency.  
So many a channel swells my heart with joy,  
So full the mind with overflowing cheer,  
Although it will not burst, but still will bear.  
Tell me, beloved stem from whence I spring !  
What ancestors were yours, and what the years  
That marked your boyhood 'mid your young compeers :  
And tell me, too, of San Giovanni's fold—  
In what condition then, and who was great—  
And who was worthy of a higher seat."

So may, reviving, feel the breath of wind,  
The charcoal in the flame resplendent shine,  
As light to hear these blandishments of mine.  
And as it grew still fairer in my eyes,  
So with a voice more gentle, and more sweet,  
But not in that same modern tongue to greet,  
It said—"From that same day, of "Ave!" cried  
In childbirth, by my mother, now a saint,  
Of me when lightened, and her sad complaint,  
Its lion, towards five hundred, fifty,  
And thirty times, had this revolving star  
Come to rekindle from its journey far.  
My ancestors and I were born in place  
Where first is reached the fourth and last remove  
By him who comes your annual race to prove.  
Enough of my forefathers to impart :  
And who they were, and whence they came to this,  
Less honoured were to mention than to miss :  
But all who then were fit to carry arms,  
Betwixt Mars' statue and Baptistery near,  
Were but a fifth of those who now are here.  
The city's blood, now blended and confused  
With Campi, and Cestaldo, and Fighine,  
In the last artisan unmixed was seen.  
Oh how much better they were neighbours still,  
The race of whom I speak—such boundaries thine,  
Galluzzo to Trespiano your confine—  
Than to have within, than t' endure the stench  
Aguglione's peasant, and of Signa's hind,  
Whose eye is sharpened, not to law-suits blind !  
Had but of world the most degenerate race

Not proved a stepdame to her Cæsar's line,  
But been like mother to her child benign,  
Such one and Florentine had traffic changed  
To Simifonte's bower, there to remain,  
Where once his grandsire went in quest of gain :  
Still were Montemurlo in the Conti's hands ;  
The Cerchi in Acone's parish bound ;  
Buondelmonti in Valdigrieve found ;  
Confusion of degrees has ever been  
Of ill, in city, both the root and source,  
As oft the food the body's ills will nurse :  
And more precipitous the blind bull falls  
Than the blind lamb ; and oft a single sword,  
Whose edge cuts more and better than a horde.  
Luni's regard, and Urbisaglia's walls,  
How fallen they are ! and in their train how go  
Chiusi's, Sinigaglia's, sinking low !  
To hear how race and lineage are undone,  
Let that appear to thee no marvel strong,  
Since cities thus can terminate ere long.  
All things you have, have each the seal of death  
As well as you : it lies concealed in some,  
So long things last—so rapid is your doom.  
And as the rolling of the sphere of moon  
Covers, discovers, shores in ceaseless play,  
'Tis thus with Florence fortune has her way.  
It ought not, then, t' appear a wondrous thing  
Of the high Florentines to tell thee so,  
Whose fame by time is hid, that few can know.  
I saw the Ughi, Catellini saw,  
Filippi, Greci, Ormanni, Alberichi,

Illustrious in the city, stoop from high ;  
Saw them as great as they were ancient, with  
Him of Sannella, and of Arca he,  
Soldanieri, Ardinghi, Bostichi.  
And o'er the gate, that 's almost crushed beneath  
New felony—a load of such a weight,  
That soon will make the shipwreck of the state—  
The Ravignani, from whence descended  
The Count of Guido, and whatever name  
From high Bellincion can deduce its fame.  
Then he of Pressa could perceive the way  
Of government : still Galigaio shows  
The gilded hilt and pommel, in his house :  
The column, argent azure, still was great ;  
Sacchetti, Giouchi, Sifanti, Barucci, came,  
And Galli, and they who redden at the name  
Of bushel ; and the branch from whence were born  
Calfucci still was great ; and to the chair,  
Sizii, Arigucci, welcomed were.  
How great they were I saw, who were undone  
By pride ! The golden bullet then succeeds,  
When Florence flourished in her mighty deeds.  
Such were the sires of those who, when your church  
Was empty, entered to repose in that,  
At consistory standing who grew fat.  
That overweening race, like dragon fierce,  
To him who flies, to him who shows his teeth,  
Or purse-like to a gentle lamb will breathe,  
Was rising then from small and little folk ;  
Ubertino Donato could not please,  
Though near by marriage, to be nearer these.

Already Caponsacco had come down  
From Fiesole to market, entering where  
Giuda, Infangato, respected were.  
A thing incredible I tell, yet true :  
Into the little circle entered gate,  
Whose name was borrowed from the Pera's state.  
And each who bore the fair emblazoned shield  
Of the great Baron, (him whose name and worth  
Saint Thomas' festival to light brings forth,)  
Held fief of him, and privilege enjoyed ;  
With people now will one his flag unfurl,  
And yet his shield be charged with bordure Orle.  
The Gualterotti, Importuni, lived :  
And far more quiet still would Borgo be,  
From newer neighbours were it only free.  
The house from which your bitter tears have sprung,  
Through just disdain, which brought you to your end,  
Made life too happy to the grave descend,  
Was honoured then with its consorted friends.  
O Buondelmonti ! why so ill to fly  
Thy nuptial bonds, and other comforts try ?  
Many a soul were joyful now, that 's sad,  
If God had given thee to the Ema's stream,  
The first time to the city that you came.  
It suited well the mutilated stone  
Which guards the bridge, where hapless Florence made  
The victim fall, where peace has never stayed.  
With these, and other people such as these,  
Florence I saw in such assured propose,  
Without a cause for any tear that flows :  
With such a race I saw both glorious

And just her people walk—the lilies ne'er  
Reversed hung down upon a hostile spear,  
Nor from domestic feud vermilion were.”

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## CANTO XVII.

LIKE him who to Clymene came to find  
Out that which he had heard against him thrown,  
Through which the sires to sons have chary grown,  
Such one was I ; and such to be perceived  
By Beatrice, and by the holy light,  
Who, for my sake, before had changed his site.  
Hence, said my lady—“ Bid the flame come forth  
Of thy desire, that it may issue out,  
Well stamped, and free from all internal doubt :  
Not that our knowledge needs from yours to grow,  
So that you dare to tell the thirst you feel,  
That one may mix when one comes to reveal.”  
“ O plant, beloved of mind ! that soarest high,  
And see'st, as earthly minds distinguish clear,  
In triangle one alone obtuse appear,  
So dost thou see contingencies emerge,  
Ere yet they are, when gazing at the point  
To which all times are present, we can count.  
While yet, with Virgil companying, I strayed  
Across and o'er the mount that purifies,  
And visited the land of death and sighs,  
Were told to me, and of my future life,

Sad words, although I feel myself, Heaven knows !  
Well squared and manned for every wind that blows ;  
And therefore, were my will content to know  
The nature of the lot awaits me now,  
The arrow that 's foreseen will come more slow.”  
So said I to the brilliant light itself,  
Which spoke to me at Beatrice' request,  
And made my will to it most manifest.  
Nor yet in strain by which the foolish world  
Was caught with guile, before as yet was slain  
The Lamb of God, removing every stain ;  
But in the clearest words, and Latin pure,  
Replied the spirit of parental love,  
Enclosed transparent in its smile above—  
“ Contingency beyond the tablets here  
Of your material world which ne'er extends,  
But in th' eternal sight reflected ends ;  
But not from thence necessity proceeds,  
Unless by sight in which 'tis mirrored clear  
The ship rolls down the stream to disappear.  
And hence, as to the listening ear arrives,  
From out of organ, gentle harmony,  
Came to my sight the time prepared for thee.  
As when Hippolytus from Athens went,  
Chased by stepmother's spite and perfidy,  
So needs must thou from Florence sever thee.  
'Tis this they wish, and this already seek ;  
This will be done by them ere time grows old,  
Where Christ the Saviour every day is sold.  
The blame will fall upon the injured side,  
In cry as wont ; but vengeance will betide,



And prove the truth of what it may divide.  
And each delightful object thou shalt leave—  
The dearest one; and this the arrow shot  
From exile's bow the first, though bitterest not.  
To prove as well how bitter is the bread  
At others' hands, to climb the steps how hard,  
And to descend by other's staircase barred.  
And that which will thy shoulders most weigh down—  
The vile, the senseless company in all,  
With which thou wilt into this valley fall.  
Ungrateful each, and foolish, impious,  
And ranked against thee : thy resentment hush—  
Upon their temples time will raise the blush,  
Their conduct their brutality will show ;  
And thus for thee it will be praise enough  
To have ta'en thy part, and to have stood aloof.  
Thy first refuge, with host thy first retreat,  
Shall be the courtesy of great Lombard,  
Who on the ladder bears the sacred bird ;  
Who shall behold thee with such kind regard,  
That of to ask, to grant, betwixt the two  
That shall be first which later comes to view.  
With him thou shalt behold that one imprest  
At birth so strongly with the Lombard star,  
His deeds will be acknowledged near and far.  
But him as yet the nations have not marked  
From new-sprung age, whose circling wheels have run  
But nine times round him since they first begun.  
But ere the Gascon Henry shall deceive,  
Some sparkles from his virtue shall recoil,  
Careless of money or of ceaseless toil ;



And his magnificences then be known  
So well, that none will venture to refute,  
And e'en the tongue of enemies be mute.  
Look thou to him, his benefits expect—  
Transmuting with his power a numerous race,  
And causing rich and poor to change their place.  
And thou shalt bear 't inscribed upon thy mind  
Of him, but tell it not : ” and told me things  
Which scarce belief e'en to the present brings.  
And added then—“ My son, the secrets these ;  
But all that 's hid, that we cannot reveal,  
A few brief years will serve thee to unseal ;  
But let not envy on thy neighbours seize :  
Thy life in future years a goal shall see  
Beyond the punishment of perfidy.”  
When by its silence finished work had shown,  
That spirit sacred, of the warp and woof  
Of web, which I at first had stretched enough,  
Commenced I then, like one in doubt, who fain  
Would hear the counsel of the one he loves,  
Desires directly what his mind approves.  
“ How well I see, my father dear ! how time  
Spurs on to reach me ere it give the blow,  
That falls the heaviest on the head that 's low.  
’Tis well that Providence should arm me then,  
If place is taken that I hold most dear,  
I lose not others by my rhymes severe.  
Already through the world of endless woe ;  
And through the mountain from whose summit fair  
My lady's eyes had raised me through the air ;  
And after, through the heaven, from light to light,

Have I seen that which, if I tell again,  
Distaste will give to many, bitter pain :  
If to the truth a timid friend I prove,  
I fear to lose my life among the race  
Who this will, one day, call the ancient days.”  
The light, in which the treasure that I found  
Was smiling, made itself, first shining bright  
As in a golden mirror, ray of light ;  
Then he replied—“ A conscience that is dimmed,  
Either from self or from another’s shame,  
Will feel thy words still ruder than thy name.  
But ne’ertheless, when all deceit’s removed,  
Make the whole vision manifest and clear ;  
Leave him who feels the sore to wince for fear.  
Thy voice will be vexatious—needs must be—  
At the first taste ; but, with digestive power,  
True vital nutriment for after hour.  
This cry of thine will issue like the wind,  
That strikes the summits loftiest of all ;  
And this of honour argument not small.  
Hence have been shown, in spheres on mountain side,  
And in the valley peopled with regret,  
The souls of those whose fame can flourish yet.  
How can the mind of him who hears believe,  
Or fix upon example that is hid—  
Whose very root has long been lost and gone—  
Or aught beside that is not seen and known !”

## CANTO XVIII.

AND now he joyed but singly in his word,  
That blessed spirit ; and I tasted mine—  
To blend the sweet with bitter I incline.  
That lady said, who led me to my God,  
“ Now change, for other thoughts to peace belong ;  
I ’m near to Him who lightens every wrong.”  
I turned me to the amorous lovely sound  
Of my loved comfort—at the moment saw  
Such love in eyes for silence’ self to draw :  
Not that my words occasion a distrust ;  
But for my mind, that cannot soar so far  
Above, unless another guide it there.  
But of that moment thus much may I say,  
That when I looked on her affection free,  
From every other wish was liberty,  
Until the eternal pleasure, that direct  
With rays on Beatrice’ fair countenance shone,  
In second aspect fell on me alone.  
And conquering with the light of a sweet smile,  
“ Turn thee and listen,” she to me replies ;  
“ Not in mine eyes is surely Paradise.”  
As sometimes in the countenance you see  
Affection marked, when it has grown so great,  
That the whole soul is occupied with it—  
Thus in the flaming splendour of that light  
To which I turnèd, th’ expression set  
Was wish to talk with me a little yet.

She said—"On this fifth resting-place of tree—  
Which from the top alone the life receives,  
Bears fruit for ever, never loses leaves—  
Are blessed spirits, which below, before  
They came to heaven, were once of mighty voice,  
That every muse had hailed, and bid rejoice.  
But now behold the horns upon the cross,  
For he whom now I name will do the act  
I've seen the lightning in the cloud enact."  
I saw along the cross a light was drawn,  
And naming Joshua, as that might do,  
And, ere the word was spoken, met the view.  
And, at the name of lofty Maccabee,  
I saw another rolling round, that flew ;  
And gladness was the whip that spun it through.  
And signs of Charlemagne, Orlando too,  
My eager eyesight in its prospect views,  
As eye its falcon on the flight pursues.  
And then athwart Guglielmo, Ricardo,  
And Duke Goffredi, through my vision throw,  
Within that cross, and Robert Guiscardo.  
Moving 'mong other lights, and mingling, saw  
The soul of him who spoke to me before—  
Among the songs of heaven an artist sure.  
I turned me to my right side to behold,  
To read, in Beatrice my duty writ,  
In words or outward sign to picture it.  
I saw her eyes so very clear and pure,  
So pleasant, that it seemed the count'nance on't  
Surpassed the others, and its usual wont :  
And as, when conscious of a new delight

In doing good, which day to day renews,  
Th' increasing virtue thus the mind reviews,  
So could I see of my progression there,  
Together with the heaven, th' increasing ark—  
As miracle more beautiful I mark.  
Such is the change the brief passage time  
Across fair lady's face the countenance made,  
When it unloads the blush you late surveyed ;  
Such in mine eyes, when I had risen so far,  
The tempered whiteness of the brilliant star,  
The sixth which now enclosed us with its bar.  
I saw within that star of Jupiter,  
The sparkling of a love remaining long,  
That signalled to my eyes our language' tongue.  
As birds arising from the river fly,  
Congratulating thus their pastures new,  
Now round their ranks, now lengthened, met the view,  
'Twas thus within their lights the saintly glow  
And sing ; and, turning as they wheel,  
Compose the figures D, or I, or L.  
At first in song were moving to their notes ;  
Resolving into one, they move along ;  
Then checked a little, and forbore their song.  
O Pegasean Muse ! that genius makest  
Both glorious, and givest it length of days,  
As they with thee their cities, kingdoms raise,  
Illustrate with thyself, that I may raise  
The figures that imagination brings :  
Thy power declare in verses that she sings.  
Displayed then, first, in five times seven in all,  
Vowels and consonants for me to view,

And parted so, and charactered thus true.  
*Diligite Justitiam* was first,  
In word and name was all depicted clear ;  
*Qui judicatis terram* then was near ;  
And afterwards, in M of word the fifth,  
Stood to their ranks, so that you might behold  
The star appear of silver lined with gold.  
And I beheld the other lights descend  
Where was the summit of the M, and stay,  
And sing, I think, the good that leads the way.  
As, at the shaking of the burning torch,  
Arise innumerable sparks of fire,  
(From whence the foolish auguries acquire,)  
Appeared from thence to rise a thousand lights,  
And climb—the one the more, the other less,  
As laws of sun which kindles them express.  
And each subsiding in its proper place,  
The head and neck of eagle to aspire,  
I saw distinctly pictured in the fire.  
He never had a guide who painted there,  
Himself the Guide by memory expressed,  
The virtue fashioning the form of nest.  
The other blessed, who appeared content,  
At first, to be in lilies o'er the M—  
With motion slow the bird attracted them.  
O lovely star ! what like, how great the gems,  
Which show our justice borrowed all its taste  
From heaven itself, whose ceiling thou inlay'st !  
Wherefore, I pray th' originating Mind,  
From whence your motion and your virtue comes,  
To mark the smoke that o'er thy radiance fumes ;

So that once more again He may go forth  
To those who in the temple buy and sell,  
Though built by martyrdom and miracle.  
O heaven's militia, which I contemplate !  
Entreat for them who still are on the earth—  
All gone astray, like children from their birth.  
Ere this was war conducted with the swords ;  
But now by taking here, now taking there,  
The bread which heaven denies to no one's prayer.  
And thou ! that writest but to cancel, think  
How Paul and Peter for the vineyard fell,  
Which thou hast spoiled, and yet are living still,  
Well may you say—"To coin I've chained desire—  
To him who wished to spend his years alone,  
But for the dancing steps his head was gone :  
That fisherman nor Paul to me are known."

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## CANTO XIX.

BEFORE me there appeared, with outstretched wings,  
Th' image beautiful, whose fruition sweet  
Made glad the crowding spirits as they meet.  
Appeared a little ruby, and in it  
A sun-ray shone, with splendour so intense,  
It came refracted to my eyes from thence.  
And not long after, what I had to draw  
Ne'er uttered voice, nor could the ink write down,  
Nor yet imagination e'er has known.



For I both heard and saw the beak discourse ;  
And in its voice I heard both I and Mine,  
When We and Ours had answered to the sign.  
And it commenced—" For being pious, just,  
Exalted here am I to glory such,  
That leaves no farther room for wish or speech ;  
And left on earth my memory to remain,  
So finished, that the race of evil men  
Must praise the virtue they cannot attain."  
In many coals, where but one heat is found,  
So, from the many loves in image shrined,  
There issued but one sound to reach the mind :  
Whence I approached them—" O perpetual flowers  
Of everlasting joy ! which make me feel,  
Singly, the odours which you all reveal ;  
Dissolve, thus breathing, th' enduring fast,  
Which long has held me in its gnawing chain,  
Who find no food on earth that I can gain.  
If other realm in heaven there be, I know,  
Which heavenly justice can its mirror make,  
Of that without a veil may you partake.  
You see with what attention I prepare  
To listen ; and you see the eager doubt  
Which long has held me in its keen pursuit."  
As looks the falcon, issuing from the hood,  
And moves the head, applauding with the wings,  
His longing shows, and into beauty springs ;  
Such was the semblance of that sign of praise,  
Where all the tissue was of heavenly grace.  
With songs, such as celestial tongue conveys,  
He then began—" He who his compass stretched



To the world's utmost bound, and wrought within  
So much that 's secret, and so much that 's plain,  
Could not the universe impress so fair,  
With image of his worth, that Word should less  
Display to all its infinite excess.

And this is certain, that the first superb  
Of every creature, who himself the sum,  
From not expecting light, fell downward home ;  
And hence, it seems, that every minor soul  
Is poor receptacle for good alone,  
Which knows no end nor measure but its own.  
And hence our sight, which needs must be a ray,  
Descending from the Mind of which we tell—  
That Mind of which creation all is full—

In its own nature is devoid of power  
So much, its origin it cannot see,  
Although it reach to Him who cause must be.  
For in the eternal Justice that we know,  
The light your lower world from this receives,  
As eye the ocean in its width perceives ;  
Which, though it see the bottom at the shore,  
Beholds it not at sea, but sees its bound,  
And cannot reach the depth that is profound.  
Light cannot be that comes not from serene  
That's never dashed ; all else is but the dark,  
Shadow from flesh, of poison but the mark.  
And thus you see unclosed the lurking cloud  
That hid the living justice from your eyes,  
Of which such frequent question would arise ;  
For saidst thou, ' On the Indus one is born,  
And on its banks there can be no discourse

Of Christ—who writes or reads of him perforce.  
All his intentions and his acts are good,  
As far as human reason can discern ;  
Sinless in life, in speech, at every turn,  
He dies, though unbaptised and void of faith.  
Now, is this justice which condemns him, then ?  
Where is his fault who never said amen ?  
And who art thou who sittest in the chair,  
To judge far off, from many thousand miles,  
Whose weakened eyesight but a span beguiles ?  
To him who reasons subtly thus with me,  
If Scripture were not over to decide,  
No marvel if some doubt to this were tied.  
Terrestrial animals ! and souls of dust !  
The will original itself is good,  
Has from itself ne'er moved, but firmly stood.  
Whate'er is consonant to it is good ;  
No good created will from it withdraw,  
From which it radiates, as by native law.”  
As o'er her nest, when she has fed her young,  
The stork is seen to turn herself to raise,  
When the fed young ones on their mother gaze ;  
Just so I did ; and so its eyebrows raised  
The blessed image, while it moved its wings,  
And o'er such counsels in suspense it hangs.  
Pursuing route, it sang—“ Even as my notes  
To thee who hear'st, but canst not understand,  
Such is th' eternal judgment to your hand.”  
And then they followed on those burning fires  
Of Holy Spirit, still within the sign  
To which the Romans made the world incline.

It recommenced—"This kingdom ne'er received  
A climbing soul, unless it looked to Christ,  
Before or since the nails had him transfixed.  
But, mark ! many a one shall call 'Christ, Christ,'  
Who, in the judgment, shall be far less near  
Than those who never chanced his name to hear.  
Such Christian Ethiopia will condemn,  
When part the two for ever to endure—  
The one eternal rich, the other poor.  
What shall the Persians to your monarchs say,  
When they shall see that volume in the light,  
In which is written every sore despite ?  
There shall be seen, amid Alberto's works,  
That deed which soon shall move the writer's pen,  
When royal Prague's a desert unto men.  
And there the wicked work he wrought on Seine,  
Who falsified the coin—his death who found  
Beneath the tusk of wild boar on the ground :  
There shall be seen the pride that marks the bound,  
Which makes the Scottish, and the English fool  
Impatient keep their border and their rule.  
And there the luxury, and the living soft,  
Of him of Spain, and that Bohemian's laws  
Who never knew nor cared what virtue was.  
The Halter of Jerusalem thou'lt see—  
A unit marks his goodness' utmost line,  
The M for million vices will define.  
The avarice, cowardice, thou'lt see,  
Of him who guards Trinacria's isle of fire,  
Where old Anchises' steps at last retire.  
And yet to show how less than small he is,

The letters should be shorter than is wont,  
In little space, and noting much upon 't.  
To each and every one, the deeds which soil  
His uncle's and his brother's, who could frame  
So great a nation, and two crowns, to shame.  
He of Portugal, he of Norway there,  
Shall well be known ; and he of Rassia's line,  
Assaying ill Vinegia's current coin.  
O happy Hungary ! if thou feelest not  
Th' oppressor's rein ; and blest wert thou, Navarre !  
Should mountains gird thee from invasive war.  
Of which ought each to think an earnest sure,  
Nicosia's, Famagosta's groanings heard,  
With sad lamenting for their wild beast stirred,  
Who keepeth equal pace with all the rest."

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## CANTO XX.

WHEN he who every part of world illumes,  
Our hemisphere descended, disappeared,  
And day on every side away was cleared,  
The heaven, the sun before with beams inflamed,  
Shone suddenly—its splendours reassumed,  
With many lights, in which but one illumed.  
And this, the act of heaven, came to my mind,  
When the world's signal, of its leader's will,  
Was silent in the blessed beak, and still :  
For so it was that all the vivid lights

Grew brighter in their rays, began their songs,  
My memory's faded leaf no more prolongs.  
Sweet Love ! thyself that mantlest in the smile,  
How ardent didst thou look 'mid sparkles bright,  
Whose spirit was derived from thoughts of light.  
And when the rare and lucid little stones,  
Which gemmed the lustre of the sixth around,  
Had stilled their music of angelic sound,  
It seemed to me I heard a river fall,  
Descending, ripple clear, from stone to stone,  
And make th' abundance of its summit known :  
And as the sound floats at the neck of lyre,  
Assumes its form, and vantage that is mute  
Can shape the wind, which penetrates the flute ;  
Thus through the chinks, and lingering in delay,  
That murmur of the eagle rose above,  
Up through the neck, as through a hollow groove ;  
Then made itself a voice, and issued thence  
Along the beak, and in the form of words,  
Such as the heart expected which records.  
" The part in me which sees, endures the sun,  
In mortal eagles," it was so I heard,  
" Now needs must you attentively regard ;  
For of the fires from whence my figure comes,  
Those whence the eye in head its sparkles sends,  
The highest rank of all on them descends.  
And he who shines through pupil in the midst,  
The Holy Spirit's songster's name his own—  
Was he who bore the ark from town to town :  
And now he knows the merit of his song,  
With what affection breathed the purposed tone,

From that reward that now attends his own.  
Of five that formed to me the eyebrow's arch,  
He to the beak, of all, the nearest one,  
Consoled the widow for her parted son :  
Now knows he well how dear it costs the soul,  
That will not follow Christ, whom years requite  
Of pleasant life—and of its opposite.  
And he who follows in the compassed round,  
Of whom I speak, across supernal arch,  
Of death, by true repentance, stopped the march :  
Now knows he that th' eternal justice stands—  
Is not transmuted—though prevailing prayer  
To-morrow make of present day the heir.  
The one who follows, with the laws and me,  
With good intention, but with evil fruit,  
To help the pastor took a Grecian root :  
Now knows he how the mischief that's deduced  
From his good deed can bring no hurt to him,  
Although the world with ruin it bedim.  
And him you see beneath declining arch  
Was William once, whom now that land deplores  
Which weeps for Charles' and Frederick's living hours :  
Enamoured now he knows is heaven itself  
Of the just king ; and see ! his countenance shows  
The living lightning which from thence o'erflows.  
Who would have thought, in wand'ring world below,  
The Trojan Ripheus graced the shining round,  
And fifth among the sacred lights was found ?  
Now knows he what the world can never know,  
Nor yet discern—of grace that is divine—  
Though to its depths he thinks not to attain.”

So will the crested lark in air expand  
In song at first, to silence then assent,  
With the full sweetness of the last content ;  
And such to me the image of the print  
Th' eternal pleasure forms, at whose desire  
Can each created thing its shape acquire.  
And yet, although to doubt my mind was bent,  
Like glass to colour which has given its hue,  
My silence waited not the subject to pursue ;  
But in my mouth the words—"What things are these ?"  
Pressed with constraining force ; and then saw I  
Signs of resplendent, great hilarity.  
Then, nearer as it came, the kindling eye  
Of blessèd sign replied to me from thence,  
To keep me not admiring in suspense :  
"I see that thou believest because I told,  
But can'st not apprehend the things I said ;  
Although believed, from contemplation hid :  
You seem like one who knows a thing by name ;  
But cannot thus its quality discern,  
Unless another to the subject turn.  
The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence,  
When ardent love and living hope can tower,  
The will divine itself to overpower :  
Not in the guise that man can conquer man,  
But conquers it because it would be won—  
Vanquished vanquishes benignantly in one.  
The first life in the eyebrow, and the fifth,  
Will make thee marvel ; for thou seest in them  
The region of the angels in their stem.  
They issued from their bodies, you believe,



Christians, not Gentiles, but confirmed in trust  
Of cross to be, and this of cross that's past ;  
For from the Inferno, one, whence none returns,  
At good-will's call came back to find his bones :  
Such are the pair that living hope rejoins.  
That lively hope that all its power put out,  
In prayers it made to God to raise him up,  
So strong importunate it reached the cup.  
The glorious soul, of which I speak to thee,  
Returned to flesh, a briefer sojourn made—  
Believed in him who gives essential aid.  
Belief grew warmer, kindled into fire  
Of real love, that, from the second death,  
Amid these living joys he gained his breath.  
The other, from the grace that's so profound,  
It wells from fountain deep, where mortal eye  
The bubbling spring could never yet descry,  
Placed all his love below on what was right—  
And hence, from grace to grace God showed to him,  
And to his eye, Redemption yet to come ;  
Whence he believed in it, nor suffered more  
The filth of Paganism his soul t' asperse,  
But taxed the nations with their ways perverse.  
Those ladies three, baptismal sponsors were,  
You see now stationed at the right-hand wheel—  
More than a thousand years before its seal.  
How far Predestination's roots remote,  
From out the ken or aspect of the mind  
To the First Cause, which is in part but blind !  
Be you, ye mortals, chary how ye judge :  
For we who see the God who is perfect,



Know not as yet the number of elect,  
And yet rejoice in our diminished light :  
Now is our good to good like this refined,  
And to His will our wishes all inclined.”  
And thus it was, from image so divine,  
To clear the dimness on my sight which lies,  
Was medicine sweet imparted for my eyes.  
And as on singer good good player waits,  
And follow bids vibration of the chord,  
So swells the song more pleasure to afford.  
While thus it spake, I can remember now  
The two blest lights salute again mine eyes,  
In concord beaming, tuneful in surprise,  
And at each word the little flames arise.

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## C A N T O    X X I .

ALREADY had mine eye returned to face  
Of lady mine ; and, with mine eyes, my soul  
From every other turned to her control.  
And yet she smiled not—said, “ Were I to smile,  
Soon would thy kindling frame begin to burn,  
And, like to Semele’s, to ashes turn.  
My beauty thus, when mounting up the stairs  
Of th’ eternal palace, is inflamed the more  
The more it climbs, as you have seen before :  
And the untempered splendour would be such,  
Your mortal power no feeling could return,

But shrivel like the leaf the lightnings burn ;  
For to the seventh splendour we have risen,  
Beneath the lion's bright and burning mane  
It radiates, mingled with its mighty flame.  
Now let your mind pursue the track of eyes,  
And make them, mirrors to the figured form  
Which in this mirror will be imaged warm."  
He who can fancy what it was to feed  
My sight upon her heavenly countenance, may,  
When to another care I turned away,  
Conceive how grateful was the task to me  
To pay obedience to celestial guide—  
The counterpoise of one with other side.  
Within the crystal which still bears the name,  
Encircling world, of leader once so dear,  
Beneath whose happy sway was naught to fear,  
Colour of gold on which a sun-ray falls,  
I saw a ladder, then, erected high,  
So far, my eyesight followed not to spy.  
On its descending steps I saw come down  
So many splendours, that I thought that all  
That was in heaven appeared from thence to fall.  
And, as from habit, native and inborn,  
The rooks assemble at the break of day,  
Move their chill feathers into warmer play,  
While some set out at once, not to return ;  
Others returning still to whence they flew ;  
And others wheeling round the rookery pursue :  
Such was the fashion in the which appeared  
The dancing lustre of those lights to trip ;  
And thus to strike upon the appointed step.

And one that nearer me restrained its flight,  
And made itself so clear, in thought I said,  
“I see love signalled in the path you tread.”  
But she, from whom I looked for how and why  
To speak or to be silent, still was there,  
And hence I questioned not against desire ;  
And she, who saw my silence, when she looked  
To Him who looks himself alone on all,  
Bid me unfold my wish and fervid will.  
Then I began—“ No merit of my own  
Can make me fit to urge you to reply,  
But let me ask for hers who bade me try :  
O happy spirit ! though so closely hid  
Within the happiness that is thine own,  
Tell me the cause why you approach to one ;  
And why is silent in the upper wheel  
The symphony of Paradise, we hear  
Devoutly echoing through each other sphere ?”  
“ The mortal ear you have as well as sight :  
You see the reason why the song is mute,  
No answering smile of Beatrice to suit.  
Already down the steps of ladder great  
So far I’ve come to greet thee with my voice,  
And with the light in which I may rejoice.  
It was not added love that made me quick :  
More love, how much the more, is glowing there,  
The flaming evidence may well appear ;  
But charity sublime makes servants here  
So do the will of Him who rules from high ;  
And such my charge, as you can well espy.”  
“ Well can I see,” replied I, “ sacred lamp !

How free-born love within this happy court  
Eternal Providence can follow short ;  
But this appears more difficult to see,  
Why thou predestinated wert long gone  
To this among companions—thou alone ?”  
I had not reached the last word of my speech,  
When of its middle it a centre made,  
And motion like a rapid wheel obeyed.  
The love then answered that was shrined within :  
“ The heavenly light comes down as to a point,  
And penetrates through this in which I mount ;  
Its virtue, with my sense of sight combined,  
Lifts me so far above myself, I see  
The highest of created things that be ;  
And hence the cheerfulness in which I flame,  
Because my vision, when ’tis clear, partakes  
Of that transparent blaze the heavenly makes.  
But even the spirit in the heaven most clear,  
The seraphim, who looks on God most high,  
He thy demand could never satisfy ;  
Because so far beyond, in the abyss  
Of law eternal, one request ’s enough,  
From each created eye it is cut off.  
When you return again to mortal world,  
Report thou this, that none henceforth presume  
To seek a sign without a footstep room.  
The mind, which beams above, is dull in each :  
Consider, then, can it accomplish there  
That which it could not in the heavenly sphere.”  
Such silence by his words prescribed to me,  
I left the question, and myself confined

To ask, but humbly, who it was enshrined.  
“ Between two shores of Italy the rocks arise,  
And not far distant from thy country’s bound—  
So high the thunder’s scarcely heard to sound—  
And form a cliff which has Catria’s name,  
Beneath the which a hermitage there lies,  
Once set apart to single sacrifice.”  
’Twas thus he recommenced his third discourse ;  
And then, continuing, he said—“ And there,  
To service of my God so firm in prayer,  
My food was simply but the olive’s juice—  
With that I lightly passed the heats and colds ;  
While thought contemplative in peace unfolds.  
That cloister once was wont to send these heavens  
No scanty harvest ; but ’tis empty now,  
And soon that emptiness will all allow.  
In that place Pier Damiano I ;  
And Peter sinner saw me once before  
Our lady’s house upon the Adrian shore.  
But little of my life remained behind,  
When I was asked, and dragged the hat to wear,  
Where each from bad to worse vacates the chair.  
First Cephas came ; of Holy Spirit then  
The vessel great ; both lean and barefoot sway,  
And took their food at every hostelry.  
Now do they want, on this side and on that,  
These modern shepherds, other stay and guide  
To help them, lest they fall on either side :  
Their palfries cover with their mantles long,  
So that two beasts are covered with one skin—  
O patience ! couldst thou such as this sustain.”

At sound of this I saw more little flames  
From ladder step to step descend, and wheel,  
And every circle beauty new reveal.  
Around this one they came and closed their ranks ;  
And then they uttered such a lofty sound,  
That nothing like it in the world is found :  
Th' o'erpowering thunder hid it from my mind.

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## CANTO XXII.

OPPRESSED with stupor, to my guide I turned,  
Like little one, should anything betide,  
Ever to where he can the most confide :  
And she, like mother succouring her son,  
When pale and breathless in imagined pains,  
With voice alone which every good contains ;  
And said—" Know you not, then, that you're in heaven ?  
And know you not that heaven is holy still,  
And that done there is done with true good-will ?  
How had the song transformed thee, and my smile,  
You may imagine, since the noise of shout  
Has moved thy mind to such confusing doubt ;  
In which, hadst thou discovered but their prayers,  
Already had the vengeance too been known,  
Which thou shalt see before thy days are done.  
The sword above is not in haste to cut,  
Nor yet delays—unless till he appear,  
Who now expects it in desire or fear.

But turn thee towards another, and thou'lt see  
Illustrious spirits that may please thy sight,  
If, as I tell thee, thou behold aright."  
Just as she pleased directed I mine eyes,  
And saw a hundred spheres, which, blending, grew  
Embellished as their union met the view.  
I stood like one repressing in himself  
The point of wish ; attempts not to demand,  
If overmuch of fear restrain his hand.  
The larger and the more resplendent pearl  
Among them came, as if to thought attent,  
To meet my wishes and to give content.  
I heard them from within—" If thou couldst see,  
Like me, the charity which in us burns,  
Conceiving thought would give its due returns ;  
But not to wait expectant at the gate  
Of lofty view, I will thine eyes reward,  
As far, at first, as may thy thoughts regard.  
That mountain ridge on which Cassino lies  
Was once frequented, on its summit high,  
By faithless race of evil augury ;  
And I am he who there conveyed above,  
And first, the name of Him who brought to earth  
The truth, which gives sublimity to worth.  
And such a grace was kindled round my steps,  
That I withdrew the towns, which round unfurled,  
From impious worship which seduced the world.  
And all the other fires contemplative  
Were men enkindled by enlivening flame,  
From which the flowers and sacred fruitage came.  
Here is Macarius—Romoaldo here—

And here my brethren who restrained their feet  
Within their cloister, and their courage great.”  
And I to him—“ The great affection which you show  
When you converse with me, and countenance good,  
In all your ardours which I see renewed,  
Hath so dilated my confiding trust—  
Just as the rose is wont, whose opening flower  
Expands as far as it possesseth power—  
Wherefore I pray, and thou, my father, grant,  
If to such grace and favour I attain,  
That I may see your image when 'tis plain.”  
And then he said—“ My brother ! your desire  
Will be accomplished in the latest sphere,  
The rest, as well as mine, completed there—  
For there is ripe, and perfect, and entire ;  
Each wish we form in that alone is seen,  
And there remains where it has ever been.  
It has not found its place—no bound divides—  
Nor climbs the ladder to the utmost height,  
Where, wrapped in distance, it eludes the sight.  
In fine, above, the patriarch Jacob saw  
It stretching, till it reached the highest round,  
To where with angels laden it was found.  
But now, to climb it, not a step departs  
From earth ; my rule itself untouched remains,  
And still without a cause the pages stains :  
The walls, which once were built for abbey great,  
Are now converted into dens ; the cowls  
Are sacks, whence but a third-rate meal unrolls.  
But grievous usury mounts not up so high,  
Against the will of God, as doth that fruit



Whence folly in monastic hearts takes root ;  
For all that ever yet the church could guard,  
Is for that race who ask it of their God,  
And not for kindred, or for purpose proud.  
The flesh of mortals so attractive grown,  
That good beginning its duration knows  
From the oak's birth until the acorn grows.  
Peter began with silver none, nor gold ;  
And I began with prayers and with fast ;  
Saint Francis, with humility's fair cast.  
And if you look to starting point of each,  
And then regard the point to which 't has grown,  
You soon will see the white has changed to brown.  
The Jordan, well we know, was driven back ;  
When the sea fled, more wonderful to see,  
Than e'en God's succouring arm, though here, would be."  
So said he first, and then he turned him round  
To meet his college, and his college staid ;  
Then, like the whirlwind, all at once obeyed.  
Motioned sweet lady with a sign to go  
Behind that train, and up that ladder high ;  
And her sign conquered all reluctancy :  
And ne'er ascended or descended one  
That more of nature's readiness could bring,  
Or power to match the sweeping of my wing.  
So, reader ! may I yet return to meet  
Devotion's triumph, which o'erclouds my rest,  
For which I weep my sins, and beat my breast.  
You had not drawn your finger from the fire  
Nor put it in, so quick as I beheld  
The sign next Taurus, which my figure held.

O glorious stars ! and thou, impregnate light  
Of lofty virtue ! whence I recognise,  
Such as it is, my genius there that lies ;  
With you arose—with you there set in night—  
The source and parent of all living ! where  
At first my youth inhaled the Tuscan air.  
And after, when the grace was given to me  
To enter on the lofty wheel above,  
Your region was the one through which I move.  
To thee devoutly now my soul aspires  
For strength and virtue, with the which to run  
To the hard trial which attracts me on.  
“ So near the last the sole resource art thou,”  
So Beatrice began, “ the tune ’twill suit  
To have thine eyes both cloudless and acute.  
And now, before thou shalt involve thee more,  
Look down and see the circling world arise,  
How far beneath our feet the prospect lies ;  
So that thy heart, all pleasant and serene,  
May meet the crowd triumphal that draws nigh,  
Whose joy re-echoes through the vault on high.”  
With face I turned, and through as many spheres  
As seven I looked ; this little globe I saw,  
So small, that smiling filled the place of awe.  
And his opinion I approve the most,  
Who holds it least ; another who regards,  
I must believe, deserves still more rewards.  
I saw Latona’s daughter in a flame  
Without the shadow, which my erring sense  
Had lately made th’ effect of rare and dense ;  
The aspect of Hyperion’s son endured ;

And saw, in near approach, the circling wheel  
Where Maia and Dione orbs reveal.  
From thence appeared to me the temperate star  
Of Jupiter, betwixt his sire and son,  
And all the changes of that brilliant one.  
And all the seven displayed their forms to me :  
How great they are—with what a rapid course—  
The magnitude, the distance, and the force !  
The small entangling net we tread so fierce,  
As I was rolling with the eternal Twins,  
Appeared from æstuaries to mountains.  
And then to lovely eyes mine eyes returned.

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## CANTO XXIII.

As sits the bird within the wished-for leaves,  
Upon the nest of her delightful brood,  
All through the night, when nothing can be viewed,  
To see the longed-for aspects of her young,  
And find the food to feed their wants withal,  
In which her labours are refreshing toil ;  
Anticipates the time on open branch,  
With warm affection, thus expects the sun,  
Fixed in regarding till the birth of dawn :  
So stood my lady in her form erect,  
Attentive turned to quarter of the sky  
Where seems the sun with less of haste to fly :  
So that, beholding her suspense and doubt,  
Like one I grew who feels a new desire,

Whom other thoughts and wishes new inspire.  
But little was the space betwixt the two  
I had to wait, I say, to see the heaven  
Enlightened more, and brighter clearness given.  
And Beatrice—" See," she said, " the crowding ranks  
Of triumph of our Lord, and all the fruit  
Which these revolving spheres to heaven have brought !"  
It happened that her face so bright and fair  
Became, her eyes' deep spring so full of joy,  
I'd better pass than into light deploy.  
As in the full moons, that appear serene,  
On high she smiles amid th' eternal signs,  
Her sisters fair, to whom her path inclines,  
I saw, outshining e'en a thousand lamps,  
A sun which flamed above in brilliance wide,  
Such as our sun to loftier looks supplied ;  
And, through the living light, the substance glowed  
With such clear radiance on the astonished sight,  
Sense could not brook, nor eyes support the light.  
O Beatrice ! thou sweet and precious guide !  
She said to me—" The virtue that o'erpowers  
Is such, against it no resistance towers.  
Here is the Wisdom, and the conquering Power  
The ways which opened 'twixt the earth and heaven  
To man, desiring which, at length were given."  
As fire, engendered from the cloud unsealed,  
Dilates and flies, refusing all constraint  
Against its nature, to the earth, when rent ;  
'Twas thus my mind, amid continued feast,  
Grew greater, issued from itself at large—  
But what it did the memory cannot charge.

“ Open thine eyes, behold me as I am :  
Thou hast beheld the things which gave, erewhile,  
The power to nature to sustain my smile.”  
I was as one who feels his genius teem  
Would lead forgotten visions to his mind,  
Attempts in vain, and finds his memory blind :  
When first I heard the proffered gift of worth  
Of so much grace unquenched, for aye to last  
Within the book which serves t’ enshrine the past.  
Resounding not, though all the several tongues  
Fair Polyhymnia and her sisters fed  
With sweetest milk, to fatten them instead,  
Could aid me to the thousandth part of truth ;  
Nor could my song reflect the blessèd smile  
Or pureness of her aspect, void of guile.  
And thus to try to shadow Paradise,  
The poem consecrate must try to bound,  
Like one who comes to interrupted ground.  
But he who thinks on the o’erpowering weight,  
And mortal shoulder which sustains the load,  
Blames not the man who trembles in the road.  
No passage this for little bark to try,  
Which leads the waves to meet our venturous prow,  
Nor steersman sparing of himself enow.  
“ Why should my face enamour thee so far,  
That you return not to the garden fair,  
Which ’neath the rays of Christ is blooming there ?  
There is the rose, in which the Word divine  
Incarnate came ; and there the lilies grow,  
The way of life whose odour lets us know.”  
Thus Beatrice. And, to her counsels prompt,  
Again I turned, to meet the dazzling rays,

To battle with my eyebrows' feeble gaze.  
As to bright ray of sun, translucent, through  
A broken cloud, a flowery meadow lies,  
While underneath the shade repose mine eyes ;  
So saw I more and more of splendours rise,  
On which bright thunderbolts threw burning rays,  
Although the lightning's source I could not trace.  
O excellence benign ! in them impressed,  
Thyself exalting to enlarge the room  
Of feeble eyes, as yet eclipsed by gloom ;  
The name of flower so fair I still invoke,  
Both morn and eve, concentred, might inspire  
My soul to dwell upon the greater fire.  
And as the awakening sight the form depicts,  
The quality, and magnitude of star—  
Which conquers there, once here surpassing far—  
On entering heaven, a flambeau severed fell,  
And formed a circlet like unto a crown,  
Encinctured, girt it in its progress down.  
Whatever melody on earth is sweet,  
Attracts the most the spirit to itself,  
Might seem harsh thunder on its cloudy shelf,  
Compared to sound of that entrancing lyre,  
Which crowned the beauteous sapphire of the sky,  
Which with the heavens of purest sapphire vie.  
“ I am angelic Love, who circle round  
The joy sublime that issued from the womb,  
Which was of our desire the lodging, home.  
Around thee, heavenly lady ! will I wheel,  
Whilst thou wilt follow Son of thine ; and where  
The sphere is higher, when thou enterest there.”  
Such was the melody which circled round,

So sealed—then each heavenly, brighter eye, ah !  
Returned the name, re-echoed—MARIA.  
The regal mantle, with its volumed folds  
That wraps the world, more bright and vivid where  
The breath of God th' eternal wheels declare,  
Above us kept the inner skirt retired,  
Withdrew so far, that the approaching cause  
Had not saluted station where I was ;  
And therefore had not eyes of mine the power  
To follow flame with coronet—proceed  
Where high it soared, approaching to its seed.  
And like a child that stretches to the breast,  
And spreads its hand when once the milk is claimed,  
With eagerness beyond itself inflamed,  
Each of those candid lights expanded high,  
With flaming spire that showed affection's glow—  
The love they bore to Mary let me know.  
And then they halted where they met my gaze ;  
“ Regina Cœli ” was the strain they sung—  
So sweet, remembrance hangs around it long.  
Oh ! what a treasure, long amassed, is there  
In those rich treasure-chests, which harvest now  
The happy seed-time and the adventurous plough !  
How they enjoy and live upon the wealth  
Acquired, when weeping in their exile cold,  
At Babylon, where they left their native gold !  
And there they triumph 'neath the mighty Son  
Of God, of Mary, in his victory won :  
With councils both the old and new conjoin,  
And him to whom the glorious keys belong.



## C A N T O   XXIV.

“ ELECT companions to the blessed seat  
At supper of the Lamb, and there to feel  
Desire is satisfied and ever full,  
If, through the grace of God, some foretaste given  
May be of that which from your table falls,  
To him, ere death the stated time recalls,  
Direct your thoughts to his immense desire,  
Refresh him with the dews 'tis yours to drink  
For ever, from the fount of which he'll think.”  
Thus Beatrice, and those the happy souls  
Became like spheres upon their steady poles,  
While radiance, fresh and comet-like, unrolls ;  
And as in clock-work, when revolve the wheels  
In different measures to the gazer's eyes—  
The first seems quiet, and the last one flies—  
Thus, as their carols differently they danced,  
They made me rate the riches they employ,  
That give a quicker, slower tone to joy.  
From that which I remarked most beauteous there,  
I saw there issued such a happy fire,  
That left no clearer flame than that t' aspire ;  
And thrice around fair Beatrice it turned,  
And that was joined with such a heavenly song,  
That vain were fancy's efforts to prolong :  
And hence the pen vaults o'er, and writes it not.  
Imagination's self and speech is cold,  
To match the brightness of its richest fold.



“ O sacred sister mine ! such thy request  
Devout, that, ardent in affection, I  
From that fair sphere detached me, which is nigh.”  
The blessed fire had closed its glowing speech,  
And thus to lady turned, had breathed a space ;  
And so, as I have said, conversed apace.  
And she—“ O light eternal of the famous man  
To whom our Lord consigned the blessed keys !  
Of wondrous joy like this to bear with ease,  
Assay this man with probes, or light or keen,  
Just as you please, that solid faith to see  
By which you found the way to walk the sea.  
If he lives well, well hopes, and well believes,  
Is not concealed from thee : thy sight is where  
Each thing is painted in its colours clear.  
But since this realm has gained its citizens  
By the true faith, 'tis good to turn discourse,  
To show to him its glory and its force.”  
As graduate in silence arms his mind,  
Until the master's proposition teem,  
To make the trial, not to end the theme ;  
'Twas thus I armed me with each reason's power  
While yet she spake, that I might ready be  
For such inquiry, and profession free—  
“ Like a good Christian, manifestly show  
Faith, what is it ? ” And then I raised my brow  
To light from whence this question breathed below.  
Then turned to Beatrice, whose countenance gave  
The prompt assurance to unlock the stream,  
Like the deep waters to the morning beam.  
“ The grace be given me, while I thus confess,”

Began I, to the foremost rank of all,  
“That thoughts may find expressions suitable.”  
And then pursued, in the same truthful style—  
“’Tis written, father! of thy brother dear,  
Romans who brought with thee to faith sincere,  
Faith is the substance of things hoped for now,  
And evidence of things as yet unseen :  
Its nature and its essence this I ween.”  
And then I heard—“Rightly hast thou perceived,  
If thou canst mark the sequence of reply,  
Why first the substance, then the proofs brought nigh.”  
And I rejoined—“The deep things which I feel,  
Imparted largely here, to none forbid,  
From every eye below are veiled and hid,  
That in belief alone these things may dwell ;  
On which is founded, too, the hope sublime :  
And hence to substance its intent can climb.  
And this belief can of itself give rise  
To reason sound, without the help of sight ;  
And hence the proof itself it brings to light.”  
And then I heard—“If such, and so acquired,  
Below, all learning to which some attain,  
The sophist’s genius might expand in vain.”  
’Twas thus it breathed, enkindled by that love ;  
And added then—“This current coin’s complete,  
This money’s standard in alloy and weight :  
But tell me if you have it in your purse.”  
And I—“Yes, for I have it clear and round,  
Nor doubt that there the stamp of mint is found.”  
And then there issued from the light profound :  
“From whence this jewel, did it shed its rays,

On which each virtue rests, as on its base ?”  
And I—“ The large effusion which was poured  
Of Holy Spirit, now diffusing through  
And o’er the parchments of the Old and New—  
There is the cause that leads me to conclude  
Acutely ; so that all the other views  
To me appear like reasonings obtuse.”  
And afterwards I heard—“ And why conclude  
Both schemes, the ancient and the new, were given,  
Inspired divinely with the tongue of heaven ?”  
And I—“ The proof disclosed by truth to me,  
Are works that followed ; ’twas not nature’s mould  
That burned the iron on the anvil cooled.”  
The answer was—“ By whom art thou secure,  
Those works were finished which you take as proof ?  
Hath any sworn, to keep distrust aloof ?”  
“ If all the world to Christian faith was turned  
Without these miracles, that sure were one,  
And all the rest the hundredth part alone.  
In poverty and want e’en thou thyself  
The vineyard entered, sowed the goodly plant,  
Once like the vine, now like the bramble scant.”  
This ended, and the sacred court on high  
Sounded—“ We praise thee, O God !”—through each sphere,  
In melody celestial, sweet, and clear.  
That noble one, who thus from branch to branch,  
Examining, had led me, so that now  
We reached at length unto the latest bough,  
He recommenced—“ The grace which dallieth  
With thy mind, hath oped thy mouth to speak ;  
So that becoming words should utterance take,

And so that I approve what issued thence :  
Express, for now 'tis fit, what you believe,  
And whence you came that credence to receive.”  
“ O holy father, spirit ! who perceived  
That root of faith, and conquered as was meet,  
And saw the sepulchre ere younger feet,”  
I said ; “ you wish that I should now declare  
The form of that which is so prompt a creed,  
And to the cause that I should then proceed.  
And I reply : In one God I believe,  
Alone, eternal ; with His will and love—  
Immovable himself—the heavens can move.  
And yet I have not, for that faith, the proof  
Physic or metaphysic ; but to me  
O'erflow the abundant dews you see  
Through Moses and the Prophets, and the Psalms,  
And Gospel ; and through you who gave the food,  
When once the Burning Spirit made you good.  
In three eternal Persons, and, in these,  
One essence, I believe ; thus one, thus three,  
To which the plural number guideth me.  
Of that deep mystery divine the truth,  
I touch, full oft the inward mind will seal,  
The word and doctrine of the Evangile :  
This is the source, and this the latent spark  
Dilates to vivid flame, with ardour is impressed,  
And, like a star in heaven, illumines my breast.”  
And as his lord attendeth to the news,  
Embracing him who brings it when he's mute—  
His ear rejoicing in the tidings brought ;  
'Twas so he blessed me as he raised his song,

And thrice embraced me, when I held my peace,  
The apostolic light, whose urging grace  
Had made me speak—and with my speech was pleased.

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## C A N T O   XXV.

IF e'er it happen that the sacred song,  
Which heaven and earth have both combined to form,  
Till leanness now my lengthened years deform,  
Should conquer cruelty, which sent me forth  
From the fair fold I slept in like a lamb,  
Till hostile wolves to chase their victim came ;  
Thenceforth, with other voice and other fleece,  
I shall return, a poet, to the font  
Where once baptised, to wear my wreath upon 't :  
For to the faith, which value gives to souls  
Before their God, I entered there ; and once,  
For it, Saint Peter bound my forehead since.  
And thence a light there issued towards us,  
From out that band whence came the first fruits once,  
The vicars of our Lord, the lonely ones ;  
And then my lady said, replete with joy—  
“ Behold !—behold the baron of renown,  
For whom the pilgrims seek Galicia's town.”  
As when returning dove alights beside  
Its mate, while each of them their wings expand,  
And, circling, murmur their affection fond ;  
So saw I one and other, princes great,  
In glorious courtesy advancing near,

Extol the food above, the heavenly cheer.  
But when the gratulating tongue was free,  
In silence each was set before my face,  
But burning so, that they o'erpowered with grace.  
And then smiled Beatrice, and thus she said—  
“O life renowned ! by whom the liberal store  
Recorded is, our church obtained of yore,  
Now let the hope re-echo through this height,  
Which well thou know'st, that oft as bright hath shone  
As when the three beheld but Him alone.”

“Lift up thy head, and be secure thy trust ;  
For that which comes up here from mortal world,  
Must needs be ripened in our rays unfurled.”  
This comfort reached me from the second fire :  
Mine eyes I lifted to the hills, whose height  
Before incurred them with excess of weight.

“Since our eternal Ruler has designed,  
Through grace, that thou shouldst meet His lords' assize  
In secret council, ere thy spirit flies,  
So that this court the truth to thee display,  
The hope of which enamoured all below,  
Both thou and they may greater comfort know.  
What is it, then ?—how blooms thy mind withal ?—  
What is the source from which it comes to thee ?”

’Twas thus the second light pursued with me ;  
That pious one, who showed the youthful plumes  
Of wings I felt the way to lofty flight,  
Prevented answer ere it came to light.

“The church that ’s militant hath not a son  
With more of hope—as in the light you’ll see  
Of sun, whence all our flock enlightened be :

The cause from Egypt that 'tis granted him  
The new Jerusalem to see to climb,  
Before the rule of war prescribed the time.  
Two other points demanded—not to know  
But that the messenger report again  
To what in thee this virtue can attain—  
I leave to him, as not too strong to bear,  
Nor food for boasting, so may he reply :  
God give him grace for this, and teach the why.”  
Like scholar seconding the teacher's voice,  
Both prompt and willing, where he is expert,  
That hidden merit lose not its desert,  
“ Hope, then,” said I, “ is expectation sure  
Of future glory, the enduring fruit  
Of grace divine and merit absolute.  
This light has visited from many stars ;  
But he who first instilled the living beam,  
Supreme in singing Him who is supreme.  
‘ Let all that hope in Thee be joyful ;  
Let them declare who know thy name divine :’  
Who would not know it with a faith like mine ?  
That hope was so inculcated by thee,  
In the epistle, that it made me full,  
And shower on others dews so plentiful.”  
While thus I spake, within the living breast  
Of burning fire a lamp shone tremulous,  
Sudden and vivid, as the lightnings cross ;  
And thus—The love for friend which me inflamed,  
For virtue my companion, to the palm,  
And till I issued from the combat calm,  
Would have me breathe to thee ; for thou delight'st



In her, and grateful thou wilt have to tell  
What promise hope can make acceptable.”  
And I—“The Scriptures, both the Old and New,  
Propose the sign, whose proof is never dim,  
From souls which God has reconciled to him.  
Isaias saith ‘That every one is clad,  
In their own land, with double vesture on ;’  
And their own land is this delightful one.  
Thy brother, too, digests still more the theme,  
There where he treats of robes of matchless white,  
Where Revelation brings those robes to light.”  
And scarcely were the last words ended, when  
“Let them hope in thee !” was uttered soon on high ;  
To which the carols all at once reply.  
And afterwards a light emerged so clear  
That winter month. had Cancer such a light,  
Would be one day alone, without a night.  
So rises, goes, and enters to the ball,  
A joyful virgin, honour but to pay,  
Without a blemish, to some bridal-day,  
As I beheld th’ enlightening splendour come  
To two, revolving on the flaming wheel,  
Which answered to the ardent love they feel.  
Mixed in the song, and beat to it the time :  
My lady kept still looking to their side,  
Just like a motionless and silent bride.  
“This was the one who on the bosom lay  
Of pelican of ours ; and this is he  
Who from the cross was called her son to be.”  
So went my lady on, but not the more  
Removed her sight, which still attentive staid,



Before and after all the words were said.  
As he who sees, with fixèd eye intent,  
The sun's eclipse, that is but partial, slight,  
And loses eyesight while he looks on light ;  
'Twas so with me with that last-mentioned fire,  
While it was said—" Why art thou dazzled thus,  
To see a thing which no abiding has ?  
On earth my body of the earth remains,  
With all the rest, until the number reach  
The purpose shadowed in eternal speech.  
With the two robes within the cloister here,  
Are lights, the two to whom 'twas given to climb :  
And this report, returning to your clime."  
To hear this voice, the flaming wheel grew still,  
And stilled with it the gently blending tone,  
And trinal harmony that breathed was gone—  
To make the labour or the peril cease,  
As when the oars, that lately swept so fast,  
At sound of whistle all are put to rest.  
Alas ! what agitation shook my mind  
When I turned round on Beatrice to look,  
And could not see her, though no distance took,  
And happy world could still her presence brook.

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## CANTO XXVI.

WHILE doubtful musing, through extinguished sight,  
Came from refulgent flame, that quenched my eyes,

A breath, that held me silent in surprise ;  
And said—" Until thy sense regain the power  
Of sight it lost by gazing upon me,  
'Twere well, discoursing, to compensate thee.  
Commence, and tell me to what point thy soul,  
Attracted flies ; and reasonably conclude  
Thy sight's bewildered, not to death subdued,  
Since lady that conducts thee through this clime,  
With her regard, the virtue can command  
Which once was found in Ananias' hand."  
" Let at her pleasure," said I, " soon or late,  
Mine eyes be healed : they were th' admitting gates  
She entered, with the fire that ne'er abates.  
The good which satisfies within this court,  
Alpha and Omega of all they write,  
Or love can read me, either strong or light."  
And that same voice, which had dissolved the fear  
Which suddenly had seized my dazzled sense,  
Now moved me to discourse, and spoke from thence—  
" You needs must sift it with a smaller sieve ;  
And fitting likewise that you tell me what  
Directs your bowstring to an aim like that."  
And I—" By philosophic arguments,  
And by authority that's here displayed,  
In me the impression of such love is made :  
For good, as far as good, and such perceived,  
Can kindle love—and that so much the more,  
When of the goodness there's abundant store.  
And to its essence 'tis advantage great,  
That every good without it which is found,  
Is nothing else but ray itself unbound ;

And more 'twill move him than another who,  
In love, reflects on this—discerns the ground  
Of truth, in which the proof of this is found.  
Such truth through him my intellect discerns,  
Who showed me that the first of things was love—  
First of the eternal substances above.  
The voice disclosed it of the author true,  
Who said to Moses, speaking of himself—  
' I'll make thee see my goodness in the shelf :'  
And thou, besides, in the commencing words  
Of herald's lofty message, first proclaimed  
Abroad the secrets of the world unnamed."  
And then I heard—" Through human intellect,  
Authority that travels self-same road,  
Keep sovereign paramount thy love to God.  
But tell me if you feel, too, other cords,  
Which draw thee to him, so that thou relate  
How many teeth this love can fasten yet ?"  
Th' intention sacred was not hid from me  
Of eagle of the Christ. I saw beside  
To what profession he desired to lead,  
And therefore recommenced—" All grappling teeth,  
With which the heart has power to turn to God,  
Assist my charity, love unalloyed :  
For both the being of the world and mine ;  
The death which he endured that I might live,  
And that which all the faithful hope he'll give ;  
With living knowledge, which I named before ;  
Have drawn, from lawless love, my bark on shore,  
And launched it on the sea to err no more.  
The leaves unfolding all the garden through,

Of th' eternal Gardener, love I so,  
As good upon them all his hands bestow."  
Soon as I ceased, the sweetest song began,  
Resounded through the heaven ; then my lady  
Said with the rest—" Holy, holy, holy !"  
And as at light acute the sleep dissolves  
Through spirit vivid, which comes out to meet  
The splendour through each coat that's so complete ;  
And th' awakened man, abhorring what he sees,  
Knows not where he is, the vigil swift dislikes,  
Until returning sense his reason strikes :  
Thus from my eyes the obstructing motes that played  
Chased Beatrice, with sun-rays of her own,  
Irradiating for miles a thousand down.  
Whence better than before I saw again,  
And stupified, as 'twere, demanded how,  
Of a fourth light, which came and joined us now.  
And then she said—" Within those rays a soul,  
The first which Love creative ever made,  
Adores the Maker once it disobeyed."  
Like leaf which is perceived to bend at top  
In passing wind, and then to rear its head  
With innate strength, and stand erect in stead ;  
So I as much, as long as lady spoke,  
With awe ; and then I felt myself secure,  
And felt the wish with which I burned before ;  
And thus began—" O apple born mature !  
O father antique ! of each wedded bride,  
Thy daughter and daughter-in-law beside :  
Devoutly then, as far's I can, I ask  
Thee to converse with me : you see my wish :

To hear thee sooner my request I hush."  
As when an animal will smooth its fur,  
To show within th' affection it has got,  
By corresponding movement of its coat :  
And similarly, then, the primal soul,  
Transparent, showed me through its covering fair  
The wish to please me, and looked gayer there.  
And then it breathed : " Without the offer made—  
Of will of thine, I can its purport see,  
Better than aught of certainty to be ;  
Because I see it in the Mirror true,  
To other thing parhelion which allows,  
While no parhelion but himself He knows.  
You wish to know how long God placed me in  
The lofty garden from the which she  
Led thee, by the lengthened ladder, up ; to see  
How long delight remained before mine eyes ;  
And the true reason of the great despite ;  
What language 'twas I used, and brought to light.  
And now, my son, 'twas not the taste of tree  
That caused such exile both of me and mine—  
It was the trespass o'er th' appointed line.  
And there, from whence thy lady Virgil moved,  
Four thousand three hundred and twice the sun  
Revolved, before this counsel I had won ;  
And sun, returning, came through all the lights  
Upon his path nine hundred thirty times,  
While still sojourning in terrestrial climes.  
The language which I spoke had spent its breath  
Before unfinishable work was tried  
By race of Nimrod, with the rest allied ;

For never issue reasonable came  
From human pleasure only, made to range  
Like fleeting sky, and find no law but change.  
A natural work it is that mortals speak,  
But so, or so, is left by nature free  
To do as thou canst best embellish thee.  
Ere I descended to the eternal woe,  
El was the name on earth of the Supreme,  
From whence came joy that folds me in extreme ;  
Eloi after, for it so befits  
That mortal use resembleth but the leaf  
On bough which goes, and other brings relief.  
Upon the mountain which o'ertops the wave  
I lived, in pure and in dishonoured life,  
From the first hour to where the second 's rife,  
When sun from quarter 's gliding through the sixth."

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## CANTO XXVII.

"To Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be  
Glory ascribed," throughout all Paradise,  
So sweet, I was bewildered with surprise.  
With what I saw, it seemed to me the smile  
Of universe ; for my entranced delight  
Entered the mind by hearing and by sight.  
Oh, joy ! oh, cheerfulness ineffable !  
Oh, life that's all composed of love and peace !  
Without desire secure, and rich increase !  
Before mine eyes there stood the torches four,

Enkindled ; and the one which came the first  
Began with greater splendour forth to burst ;  
And such in countenance they both became,  
As Jupiter would be, if he and Mars  
Were birds, and interchanged their plumes diverse.  
The Providence which there assigned the round,  
The place, the office in the happy choir,  
Imposed deep silence where the lights aspire ;  
When thus I heard—"Should now my colour change,  
Marvel not : even in the time I speak to you,  
Thou'lt see all those you look on change their hue.  
He upon earth who has usurped my place—  
My place, that place of mine, which now is void  
Before the presence of the Son of God—  
Hath made my cemetery a common sewer  
Of slaughter and of mud ; and he, perverse,  
Who fell from hence, is pleased with the reverse."  
With that same colour which the adverse sun  
Paints, morn and eve, the intervening cloud,  
I saw that then was all the heaven imbowed.  
And like some honoured lady, who remains  
In her own self secure, but when she hears  
Of others' failing, timid she appears ;  
'Twas so that Beatrice her countenance changed :  
And such eclipse I think there was in heaven,  
Such o'er the suffering Lord of Glory driven.  
And then her following words proceeded on,  
With voice that was transmuted even more  
Than what the countenance had been before :—  
" 'Twas not for that the spouse of Christ was nursed  
With blood of mine, and Linus, Cletus, told,



That she might use them for the gain of gold ;  
But for possession of this happy life,  
Sextus, Pius, Calisto, and Urban,  
Have shed their blood, lamented every one.  
Not such intent of ours that some should sit,  
Of our successors, on the dexter hand,  
And some upon the left of Christian band ;  
Nor that the keys committed to my hands  
Should be for ensign on the standard prized,  
Which led its hosts to fight against baptized ;  
Nor I a figure on the venal seal  
Of rights once sacred, sold and lied instead,  
For which I blush, and turn to burning red.  
For now in garb of shepherd, ravening wolves  
Are seen to prowl above our pastures all.  
Defence of God ! why art thou long to fall ?  
Our blood the Cahorsines, the Gascons now,  
Prepare to drink. Oh, source that once was good !  
To what an end, with vileness what imbued !  
But the high Providence which Scipio used  
To fend his Rome, the glory of the world,  
Will rescue soon, if right my thought's unfurled.  
And thou, my son ! who, through terrestrial weight,  
Returnest down, thy speech is not forbid,  
And hide not thou the thing I have not hid."  
Down through the air as drive the freezing mists,  
When first the sun has touched upon the horn,  
And reached the wintry sign of Capricorn,  
So could I see the sky was decked above,  
Where the triumphant vapours float along,  
Which lately sojourned with their shining throng.



My sight pursued their semblances above,  
And followed till the intervening space  
Had distanced far the efforts of my gaze ;  
And hence my lady, seeing me at rest  
From looking up, said—" Lower now your look,  
And see the compass that your journey took."  
For from the hour that I had gazed at first,  
I saw that I had passed through all the ark,  
From the meridian to first climate mark ;  
So that from thence, from Gades, I could see  
Ulysses' passage, and the neighbouring shore,  
From which Europa joyfully they bore.  
And more I had discovered of the site  
Of this small spot ; but now advanced the sun  
Beneath my feet, a sign and more was gone.  
And my enamoured mind, which dallied round  
My lady ever, burned with ardour more  
To bring my eyes to her, their home before.  
If nature, or if art, can form a food  
For human eyes to carry to the mind,  
From mortal flesh, or painting to it joined,  
All such had less than nothing seemed beside  
Diviner pleasure, and the bright recoil,  
When I beheld her countenance and smile.  
It was the virtue of th' indulgent glance  
Snatched me above from Leda's lovely nest,  
And through the swiftest heaven my course impressed.  
The portions vivid most, and most sublime,  
Are uniform, that I cannot explain,  
Where entered Beatrice, and rose again.  
But she who saw, and looked on my desire,

Began, and laughing, with such graceful mirth,  
That God appeared rejoicing at its birth—  
“ Nature of motion, quiet in the midst ;  
And all beside is then revolving round,  
And here commencing, as from starting bound.  
This heaven itself hath not another sphere,  
But mind divine, from which is kindling bred,  
The love that rolls it, and the virtue shed.  
The light and love of single circle bound,  
As this the others ; he the precincts warm  
Alone perceives who can its compass form.  
Nor is its motion from the rest distinct,  
But all the others measured are by this,  
As five the half, and ten you cannot miss.  
In such a flower-pot time can keep his roots,  
But in the others only show the leaves,  
Thy mind acknowledges, at once perceives.  
O hearts that covet ! which the world o’erwhelms,  
So deep that no one has the power to rise,  
Or from th’ entangling waves to lift his eyes.  
In men how well intention ever blooms ;  
But the continued rains can spoil the shoot,  
And turn the plums into corrupting fruit.  
For faith and innocence are found alone  
In little children ; each of them is gone  
Before the cheeks are overspread with down :  
The little stammerer can keep his fast  
With loosened tongue, who will devour too soon  
Whatever food, and in whatever moon :  
Such one will prattle love, and listen to  
His mother, who, when language is entire,

To see her in her grave may yet desire.  
So is the white skin changed to black at last,  
In the first aspect of his daughter fair,  
Who comes with morning, leaves with evening air.  
And thou, that marvel none in this be seen,  
Know that on earth they govern not at all ;  
Thus human family are wanderers all.  
Ere January be from winter edged,  
By the neglected hours that fall away,  
These higher spheres shall roar—a change essay ;  
Till fortune, that expects so much, shall turn  
The poop to where the prow was turned before—  
So that the fleet shall lay her course from shore,  
And the true fruit shall follow on the flower.”

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## CANTO XXVIII.

AGAINST the current of this present life  
Of wretched men, when she the truth unfolds,  
Who had emparadised the mind she holds,  
As in a mirror, when a flame behind  
One sees, that seems enkindled at his back—  
As soon as sight and thought their purpose lack,  
He turns him round, to see if glass be true,  
And, turning, sees that it accords in time  
With image true, as metre with its rhyme.  
So memory looks backward to recall  
My former action, looking in her eyes,

When cord of love could liberty surprise.  
And as I turned me round, I felt mine touched  
With what that volume ever must contain,  
To every eye which can the prospect gain.  
A point I saw which radiated a light  
So sharp, that e'en the eye to which 'twas put  
Must close the eyelid from the rapid cut.  
The smallest star we see from hence had been  
A moon, compared to that resplendent spark,  
As star beside another star you mark.  
As far, perhaps, though yet appearing near,  
The halo round the light its colours deck,  
When vapours gather o'er it wide and thick :  
Distant, but round the point a wheel of fire,  
With motion rapid, which would far outgo  
The swiftest movement round the world we know.  
And this was by another circumscribed,  
That was by a third, third was by a fourth,  
By fifth the fourth, and by a sixth the fifth ;  
Above there followed seventh, spread so far,  
That Juno's messenger had been too strait  
To hold that circle in its arch complete.  
And thus the eighth, the ninth, and every one,  
More slowly moved, as it was more remote,  
In number distant from the one we note.  
That one had flame that shone the most sincere,  
Which was less distant from the sparkle pure,  
And to its truth itself could more inure.  
My lady, who beheld me o'er this care  
In strong suspense, said—" From this point depends  
The heaven, and nature all which to it tends.

Behold that circle which is most conjoined,  
And know its motion is so rapid made,  
From the enkindling love which it obeyed."  
And I—" If in such order were disposed  
The world, as that in which those circles wheel,  
It were enough without the law to tell ;  
But in the world that's sensible, we see  
That substances are there the most divine  
The more they're distant from the centre line.  
And hence, if my desire can find a bound  
In this admired angelic temple's grace,  
Where love and light alone confine the space.  
'Twere right that I should hear how copy and  
Example fail one method to attain ;  
For by myself I look at this in vain."  
" If fail thy fingers to unloose the knot,  
For want of power, no marvel there regard ;  
For want of trying it has grown so hard."  
'Twas thus my lady said. " Then take the word  
I tell thee, and the thirst you feel supply ;  
Revolve it in thy mind, and that subtilly.  
Corporeal circles widen and expand  
As more or less of virtue they contain,  
Distended or diffused through every vein.  
Greater the goodness, greater then the health ;  
Greater the health, a greater body bears,  
If true proportion in each part appears.  
Hence he who carries with himself the whole  
Of highest universe will chiefly move—  
The one that's best in knowledge and in love.  
Thus if thy compass take the virtue in,

And not the appearance of the circle round,  
Although the substance greater should be found,  
Admired proportion, harmony you'll see,  
Of great to more, of smaller to the less,  
In every heaven and its intelligence."  
And so remains all splendid and serene  
The hemisphere of air when Boreas blows,  
From milder cheek, more pleasant than the snows :  
For thus was cleared away, resolved the cloud,  
Before o'ercast till heaven came forth and smiled,  
In all its quarters beautiful and mild.  
'Twas so with me ; provided by the hand  
Of lady with an answer that was clear,  
Which, like a star in heaven, made truth appear.  
And when her words had ceased, as sparks proceed  
From fervid boiling iron in a blaze,  
Thus from the circles shot the burning rays.  
So many kindled followed on each spark,  
That all the numbered spots upon chess-board,  
Twofold a thousand times, could scarce afford.  
I heard hosannas sound from choir to choir,  
To the fixed point that keeps them to their where—  
Their land that holds them where they ever were.  
And she who saw the doubt within my mind,  
Said—"The circles first the nearest to the prime,  
Have shown thee seraphim and cherubim ;  
With such velocity pursued their troops,  
The likeness to the point tow'rd which they climb,  
And gain it as their vision's more sublime.  
Those other loves around them that revolve,  
Are thrones, beholding Him who is divine,

Who terminate the first the threefold line.  
And this you ought to know—all have delight  
The greater when the truth profound they see,  
Where every intellect can quiet be.  
From thence may be perceived the ground on which  
Our happiness consists—in what we see—  
For that we love can only second be.  
In seeing, too, the measure of reward  
As grace, good-will, can severally divide—  
For so from step to step we must proceed.  
The other three that blossom and that bud  
In this fair spring-time of eternal light,  
When Aries never injures in the night,  
Perpetually hosannas breathing out,  
In threefold melody, in orders three,  
Rejoice in sweet internal harmony.  
Compose the hierarchy kingdoms three—  
Dominions first ; the Virtues then arise ;  
The order third the name of Powers supplies ;  
And after them the Choirs ; the next to last,  
The Principalities archangels bound ;  
And, last of all, th' angelic bands are found.  
These orders all are given to look on high,  
And conquer what's below, that all to God  
Tend of themselves are drawn the upward road.  
And Dionysius loved with such desire  
To contemplate these orders, and their law,  
Like me could name, distinguish what he saw.  
But Gregory after differed from his rule ;  
But in this heaven when he his eyes unclosed,  
Laughed at himself, and in the truth reposed.



And if such secret truth, while yet on earth,  
A mortal eye could see, regard not this,  
When one who saw't on high could never miss  
To show him that and other mysteries.

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## CANTO XXIX.

WHEN the twin brother stars, Latona's sons,  
Beneath the signs of Ram and Libra gone,  
Upon the horizon make an even zone,  
And from the zenith-point alike hang down,  
Until the one and then the other reft,  
Have changed their hemisphere, their balance left ;  
So long, with countenance painted with a smile,  
In silence then regarded Beatrice  
The point which me had conquered with surprise,  
And then commenced. " I do not ask," she said,  
" That which you wished to hear ; I saw it then,  
Where graven deep is every where and when.  
Not for the sake of His essential good  
It could not aid. but that his splendour might  
Attest his own existence, shining bright  
In His eternity, beyond all time,  
All compass else, at his own pleasure used  
In newer loves th' eternal love diffused.  
Nor yet at first, as if 'twere torpid, lay ;  
Ere yet Before or Since the world had proved,  
Spirit of God upon the waters moved.



The form and substance, in joint essence pure,  
Came forth to act—to no vain purpose went—  
As from a three-stringed bow three arrows sent.  
And as in glass, in amber, crystal, shines  
A ray that comes, that is, when seen to fall  
At once entire, without an interval ;  
Triformed effect proceeding from its Lord,  
In its own being radiated alone,  
Without a difference or exordium known.  
Together made created substance came,  
In order due ; and those the highest placed  
In world, in whom pure action could be traced ;  
For power alone had but the lowest place ;  
And power with action in the midst was found,  
Together banded, ne'er to be unbound.  
Jeronimo has given thee treatise long,  
Ages since angels first created were,  
Before another world was formed to bear.  
This truth I tell is writ on many a page  
Of writers of the Holy Spirit sent,  
And thou wilt see it, if thou look'st intent ;  
And reason, too, would have it in some sort,  
That would not let the moving powers remain  
So long, their bright perfection to attain.  
Now where, and when, and how created were  
These loves, thou know'st ; exhausted now the thirst  
Which these three ardours in your bosom nursed.  
The numberer could not reach to twenty-one,  
Ere part of angels fell, whose fall perturbed  
Your world, and all its elements disturbed :  
The rest remained and all their tasks began,

Which thou discernest fraught with such delight,  
That in the round they're never lost to sight.  
The source of falling, th' accursed pride  
Of him thou sawest in the centre, pained,  
To bear the loads within the world constrained.  
Those you see here were modest to perceive,  
That by the Goodness they were all create—  
Which formed Him ready ministers of state :  
For far exalted were their views above,  
With grace illumined ; and their merit proved,  
By firm and overflowing kindness moved.  
I would not have you doubt, but certain be—  
'Tis meritorious to receive this grace,  
For thus affection shows its open face.  
And now, around this consistory gaze,  
And contemplate at ease, if words of mine,  
Unaided, reach their purpose and design.  
But since, on earth, 'tis whispered in your schools,  
Th' angelic nature is of such a kind,  
Perception, memory, will, are parts of mind ;  
Again, I say, that you may see the truth  
In purity, which they confuse, who'd know,  
Equivocate, and falsely read below.  
Since first these substances, o'erjoyed, beheld  
The face of God, they never turned their sight  
Away from it, in which there's naught but light.  
For where no interruption breaks the sight,  
By object now, there's no occasion sought  
To call on memory for divided thought ;  
So that below they sleep not but they dream—  
Believing, disbelieving, truths they name,

Though one has more of fault and more of shame.  
You walk not by, nor go one path below ;  
But through philosophy transported rove,  
As superficial love and fancy move.  
And here above deserves less anger this,  
Than when the Scripture that 's divine 's postponed,  
Wrested to suit a purpose, or disowned :  
No thought is made of how much blood it cost  
To sow it in the world ; and how 'twill please,  
Who humbly asks t' approach it. At his ease  
Each studies to appear, and how to make  
His own inventions, which the preachers cross—  
Meanwhile the gospel 's silent, at a loss.  
One says the moon turned back, withdrew her light—  
In Christ's last passion interposed her frame,  
So that the light of sun all dark became :  
And others that the light concealed itself,  
And that the Spaniards and the Indians saw,  
Like the Judeans, such eclipse with awe.  
Florence has not more Lupi, Bindi names  
Than fables, which are cherished through each year,  
And from the pulpit shouted here and there ;  
So that the little lambs, who do not know,  
Return from pasture, feeding on the wind.  
And no excuse it is that they were blind :  
Christ in his first commission never said—  
“ Go and preach trifles to the world to save ;”  
But true foundation to disciples gave :  
And this was sound sufficient in their cheeks ;  
With this to fight, with this to light the fire  
Of gospel faith, for shield and lance to bear.

To-day one goes with pleasantries and mirth  
To preach, and if the hearers laugh enough,  
The cowl can swell without a sadder stuff :  
But such a bird there nestles in that hood,  
That, if they saw it, they would never wait  
To hear the pardon come from such a pate,  
Through which so largely folly grows on earth,  
Without the proof of testimony clear,  
To every promise they will lend an ear.  
Through this Saint Anthony feeds so fat his swine ;  
And others, also, who are worse combine,  
Who pay for diet with a falser coin.  
But since we have digressed enough, recall  
Your eyes again unto the way direct—  
The end of way with end of time t' expect.  
This nature, too, advanceth far beyond,  
In number, so far that no mortal tongue  
Nor yet imagination holds so long :  
And if you mark what Daniel has revealed,  
You'll see the thousand thousands that he tells  
Indefinite, the number true conceals.  
Light's primal riches, which irradiate all,  
In many a way can all of them receive,  
As many as the splendours which conceive ;  
And thus, e'en like the action that conceives,  
Follows the effect, and love's delightful tide  
With varying warmth and fervour is supplied.  
Behold how high, how deep the eternal love  
From which so many mirrors have been made,  
Yet after all the light to each conveyed  
One as before, and in itself arrayed."

## C A N T O   X X X.

PERHAPS six thousand miles from hence 'tis now  
The burning hour of six ; this world has led  
The shadow falling to the level bed—  
Begins the midst of heaven, profound to us,  
To look as when it happens that the star  
Has lost its place at length in depth so far.  
And as the clearest waiting-maid is come  
Before the sun, so heaven has closed each one  
From view to view, until the loveliest's gone.  
Triumphant splendour thus could play around  
The point that overcame me when opposed,  
Appearing lost in that which it enclosed :  
So by degrees my prospect was extinct,  
And then my eyes to Beatrice returned  
From seeing nothing, and from love that burned.  
If all that hitherto was said of her  
Were now centred in a single praise,  
It would not equal nor supply this case :  
For beauty beyond measure, such I saw,  
Not passing ours alone, for I believe  
Its Maker only could its joy receive.  
By this place, then, I grant me overcome ;  
More than by any passage in his theme  
Might comic, tragic actor baffled seem :  
For as the sun the sight that trembles most,  
'Tis thus remembrance of the sweetest smile  
My mind dissevers from itself the while.

From the first day that I beheld her face  
In life before, until this latest sight,  
No break could interrupt my song, nor blight ;  
But now 'tis right pursuit at last should cease,  
Poet to sing her beauty any more,  
As artist does when once his limit's o'er.  
Such as she is, I leave her fame to band  
Beyond my trumpet, which declining goes,  
Its arduous subject drawing to a close.  
With act and voice of leader, prompt and free,  
She recommenced—" Now have we issued quite  
From body great to heaven's ethereal light ;  
Light intellectual, which is full of love ;  
Love of true good, that is replete with joy ;  
Joy, that transcends all other sweets that cloy.  
Here shalt thou see the two militia bands  
Of Paradise ; clad one of them as they  
Shall meet thine aspect at the judgment day."  
Like sudden flash, which dashes quick away  
The nimble spirits of the sight, and stays  
The eye in action, till it naught surveys ;  
So, round me, vivid and refulgent light  
Had left me bandaged with so bright a veil,  
That naught appears, nor could my sight prevail.  
Attractive love, that ever stills this heaven,  
Concentrates in itself each ransomed name—  
Consumes the candle to increase its flame.  
No sooner were those accents in my ear,  
Though brief, than I perceived my feelings soar  
Above myself, and felt my virtue more  
Refreshed ; I looked abroad on new-sprung light,

And such no other light, however pure.  
But after that my eyesight could endure,  
And saw, in form of river, light flow down,  
Like lightning 'tween two banks admired, which bring  
The varied colours of the lovely spring :  
From such a stream there issued lively sparks  
On every side, and lighted on the flowers,  
Like rubies which surrounding gold o'erpowers ;  
Intoxicated then as with perfumes,  
Replunged into the wondrous river fair ;  
And one still issued as one entered there.  
“The high desire that now inflames thy heart,  
To gain some knowledge of the things you see,  
Delights me more, the more it urges thee :  
But of this water it is right you drink,  
Before you satisfy a thirst like thine.”  
So spake the sun to every look of mine ;  
And then—“The river, and the topaz lights you see,  
Which entered, issued, and the laughing flowers,  
Are but the shadowy types of future hours.  
Not that these things are of themselves too crude,  
But want of power perception will perturb,  
Which never gazed on such a sight superb.”  
No infant is there will so sudden rush,  
With face turned to the milk, if it awake  
Beyond its usual hour, the food to take,  
As I to cleanse the mirrors of mine eyes,  
Inclining down to look into the wave,  
Whose waters' promise such improvement gave ;  
And as my dewy eyelids drank of it,  
It seemed to me a novel change was found,

And from its length that it had turned to round.  
And then, as people who have just unmasked,  
In other dress from what they lately wore,  
Make void the semblance which they had before ;  
So changed before me into greater mirth  
The flowers, the sparks, that I at length surveyed  
Both courts of heaven to open sight displayed.  
O splendour of my God ! through which I saw  
Th' exalted triumph of the kingdom true,  
Grant me the virtue to disclose the view !  
A light there is, that makes Creator seen  
To creature visible in lofty space,  
In which alone he sees his native peace ;  
And so distends in figure circular,  
That its enclosing bound on every side  
Could gird the sun, but with embrace too wide.  
Its whole appearance is a single beam,  
Reflected on first motion's primal hour,  
That takes from thence its spirit and its power.  
So looks some cliff upon the stream below  
Mirrored, as if to see its beauty's power,  
How rich it is in every herb and flower ;  
So standing high, the light around, around,  
I saw, in gaze on more than thousand thrones,  
On high returned, whom earth no longer owns.  
And if the lowest step absorb a blaze  
So great of light, what largeness then receives  
This rose, expanding on its outward leaves !  
But neither breadth nor height bewildered view,  
Or yet could hide the grandeur of the sight—  
The sense how great, and what, of that delight !



For near nor far, nor places nor removes,  
Where God employs no second means to rule,  
And natural law withstands not at the full.  
Into the yellow of the eternal rose,  
Dilating into perfect shape, ne'er gone,  
Which spreads its odours in the winter sun,  
Like one who's silent, yet who fain would speak,  
Had led me Beatrice, to show the sight :  
"How great th' assembly of the robes of white !  
Our city—see how far its span extends !  
Behold our seats ! which nearly all are full,  
And few are wanting to desire and will.  
In that great seat, which now attracts thine eyes  
By the bright crown already o'er it placed,  
Before this wedding supper thou shalt taste,  
Shall sit the soul, below, Augustus claimed—  
Of the great Harry—who will come too soon,  
Directing Italy before 'tis noon.  
The blind cupidity, the sorcerer's draught,  
Hath made you like a little child, and worse,  
Who dies of famine while it chases nurse.  
Makes one a prefect in the forum be  
Divine, who walks not, covert or abroad,  
With him according in one common road ?  
But little longer by his God endured  
In sacred office ; with a lower graced,  
Where Simon Magus for his merit's placed,  
And lower still Alagna be debased."

## CANTO XXXI.

IN form, then, of a white rose shown to me,  
The high militia of the temple stood—  
The bride whom Christ espoused with his blood.  
The other too, which, flying, sees and sings  
The glory of the One whose love is sweet,  
And all whose goodness unto them so great,  
Were climbing like the bees within the flower—  
Alighting now, and now returning where  
The sweets of labour in their home they share—  
Descending in the spreading flower, adorned  
With many leaves, and thence remount, return  
To where their love has ever made sojourn.  
The faces of them all of living flame,  
The wings of gold ; and all the rest was white,  
That never snow arrived at such a light.  
Descending down the flower, from bench to bench,  
They spoke of peace and ardour they acquired  
In voyage ventilating, the side untired :  
Nor interposed, between the height and flower,  
Shade from such plenitude, when flying o'er,  
To dim the bright, the brilliant to o'erpower.  
Because the light divine can penetrate  
Through universe ; and, as in truth 'tis fit,  
There can arise no obstacle to it.  
Secure, rejoicing kingdom as it is  
With nations old, and crowded with the new,  
All love and sight directed to one view.

O light triformed ! which from a single star  
Can scintillate to them, delight them so,  
Look down on us, upon the storm below.  
If the barbarians, from their wide-spread home,  
(Where Helice, the constellation, wheels,  
Rolls with her son, their amplitude reveals,)  
Beholding Rome, and all its arduous works,  
Were stupified to see the Lateran rise,  
O'er mortal things, advancing to the skies ;  
I, who had come from human to divine,  
From time to see eternity o'erwhelm,  
From Florence to a just and healthy realm.  
With stupor what ! ought I to muse alone ?  
And truth to say, within that state and joy,  
I scarce could hear, or yet my tongue employ.  
So does a pilgrim recreate himself,  
And gaze within the temple of his vow,  
At home reporting all its wonders now.  
Thus through the living light, conducted on,  
I led my eyes through all the just degrees,  
Now high, now low, now circling at their ease ;  
Saw faces beaming with persuasive love,  
Expression's traces bright, and, with her smile,  
Actions adorned with each ennobling style.  
The general outline form of Paradise  
Already had my glances ascertained,  
Nor fixed, as yet, on any point remained ;  
And turned me, with a will rekindled fresh,  
To ask my lady of the things which brought  
My mind to feel suspended in its thought.  
Of one I thought, another answered me,

(’Twas my belief that Beatrice I’d see ;)  
A sage, in glory clad, appeared to me.  
Diffused there were, o’er eyes and cheeks benign,  
A kindly joy, and pious gesture too,  
Such as in tender father one should view.  
“ And she ! where is she ? ” suddenly said I.  
He said—“ I come to answer thy desire  
At Beatrice’ request, who sent me here.  
If you look up to the third circle there,  
From summit you will see her on the throne  
Her merits have allotted as her own.”  
Without reply, I lifted up mine eyes,  
And saw that she had made herself a crown  
Of rays eternal, thence reflecting down  
From region of the highest thunder-cloud.  
A mortal eye would not be distant more,  
Abandoned to the deepest ocean’s roar,  
As Beatrice was distant from my sight ;  
But nothing hindered, so that likeness came  
Through no mixed medium, and to me the same.  
“ Lady ! in thee my hope still blossoms fresh,  
Who once, to aid me, left your footsteps’ trace  
Even in the desert of infernal space.  
From all the things, as many as I’ve seen,  
And from thy power and goodness in mine eyes,  
Thy grace, thy virtue, both I recognise.  
From slave thou brought’st to glorious liberty,  
By all the ways, by all the means you could,  
And all that gave you power to do this good.  
Magnificence preserve of thine to me,  
So that this soul, whose health thou hast secured,

May please thee ere the body is immured.”  
’Twas thus I pleaded ; and, though distant far,  
As it appeared, she smiled a sweet reward,  
Turned to eternal fountain of regard.  
Then said the sage—“ That you may finish now,  
And perfectly, the journey that remains,  
(To which entreaty sacred love constrains,)  
Glance with thine eyes, and look this garden through ;  
Which sight may help thee to enkindle thine,  
To mount still farther by the ray divine :  
The queen of heaven, for whom I burn in love,  
Entire will show you grace, and all regard,  
For I am faithful, and her own Bernard.”  
Such like is he who from Croatia comes  
To see Veronica, that ancient print,  
And, smit with antique fame, delighting in ’t ;  
In ’s spirit says, when it is shown to him,  
“ Oh ! the Lord Jesus Christ ! thou God of mine !—  
And this, indeed, was this resemblance thine ! ”  
And such was I when gazing at the love,  
Vivacity of him, who, in this world,  
Contemplating the peace of that unfurled.  
“ Thou son of grace ! this state of pleasantness,”  
Commenced he then, “ to thee cannot be known,  
If thou continuest with thine eyelids down.  
Look at the circles, at the most remote,  
Till you behold the queen upon her seat  
Enthroned, with all her subjects at her feet.”  
I raised mine eyes, and as at matin hour  
The eastern quarter of horizon shines,  
And conquers that part where the sun declines,

As if I climbed from valley to the hill,  
In the extreme I saw a part surmount,  
In splendour, all of the opposing front.  
And as the portion which expects the team,  
Ill drove by Phæton, is inflamed the most,  
And neither side of such a light can boast ;  
Pacific oriflamme's enlivening rays  
Shone brighter in the midst, in measure thus :  
At side the flame had slackened, and grew less.  
In that mid space I saw the wings displayed  
Of more than thousand angels in their mirth,  
Distinct in light and artificial worth.  
I saw them at their pleasant plays and songs,  
Such beauty smile, that there was joy impressed  
In all the eyes of all the other blessed.  
And if I had such riches in my speech,  
As in imagination, I should fear  
To tell or touch upon delight so dear.  
Bernardo looked, and when he saw mine eyes  
Upon that burning heat of his intent,  
His own on her with such affection bent,  
As made my own to see her more ardent.

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## CANTO XXXII.

THOUGH wrapt in high delight, contemplating  
The teacher's liberal office he assumed,  
And then in holy words like these resumed :

“ The wound that Mary closed again with oil,  
That one who sits so beauteous at her feet  
First oped, and first disclosed the fever heat ;  
And where the third seats, in their order placed,  
Sits Rachel, underneath her place,  
With Beatrice, as you behold her face.  
Sarah, Rebecca, Judith, and the one  
Who was the ancestress of him whose song  
Remorse made ‘ Miserere ’ echo long.  
And so may you behold, from leaf to leaf,  
Each whom I name, the station which it shows,  
As down I go along the leaves of rose.  
And thus descending to the seventh, you see  
Successive Hebrew names unfold their power,  
Distinctly grace the tresses of the flower.  
For, in proportion to the eye of faith  
They fixed on Christ, these have the place of wall,  
Whence runs division of the sacred scale.  
Upon this side, and where the flower ’s full blown,  
With all its leaves, you see are seated some,  
Even those who once believed in Christ to come.  
Where broken off, the semicircles show  
An empty space to stand, the rest have room,  
Who turned their eyes to Christ already come.  
And as on this side all the glorious bench  
Of lady of the heaven, and seats beneath,  
Which make together such a mighty wreath,  
So opposite are those of the Baptist,  
(The sacred desert, and the martyr’s wrong,  
His sufferings here, two years of hell prolong ;)  
And under him, in circling lines, are seen

Francesco, Bendetto, and Augustine,  
With others downward here from line to line.  
Now mark the care of Providence divine,  
Of faith that one and other aspect will  
In equal portions all the garden fill ;  
And from the downward step which strikes in twain,  
And cuts the parties into two direct,  
No merit of its own can seat affect.  
It is through others, on conditions set,  
That all these spirits are absolved and loose,  
Ere good or evil they had power to choose.  
And well may you perceive it by their looks,  
By the infantine voices you may hear,  
If you observe them straitly, and give ear.  
And now you doubt, and, doubting, silence keep ;  
But I will loose for thee the hardening knot,  
In which is bound thy subtlety of thought.  
Within this realm of amplitude and bliss,  
Contingency a place hath never won,  
No more than sorrow, thirst, or famine one :  
For by eternal law's established all,  
Whate'er you see ; and to the purpose knit,  
E'en as the ring which will the finger fit.  
This nation, then, accelerating pace  
To real life, may come, in reason's name,  
The more, the less of excellence to claim.  
The King through whom this kingdom made a pause  
In love, and settled in so great delight,  
That not a wish could dare a further flight,  
The minds of all, in his rejoicing sight,  
He made at pleasure, differently endowed ;



The effect itself sufficient proof allowed.  
And this expressly is declared and marked  
In sacred Scripture, where the twins have room  
To make their quarrel in their mother's womb.  
For thus, according to the coloured hair  
Of such a grace, the loftiest gift of light  
Should wreath its temples with its honour bright.  
Without reward, then, of their manners, they  
Are placed along, in due degrees assigned,  
And differing only in acuter mind.  
It was enough, in ages' primal course,  
With innocence salvation to obtain,  
The parents' faith for children to retain.  
And when the early stages were complete,  
With wings of innocence the males could rise,  
And virtue draw from circumcision's sighs :  
But when the time of grace at length arrived,  
Without in Christ the baptism to bestow,  
An innocence like that remained below.  
Regard the countenance that resembles Christ  
The most : for in its clearness, if revised,  
It will prepare thee to set eyes on Christ."  
I saw such gladness showering o'er her face,  
From sacred souls of couriers, who plied  
Across that depth, and quick'ning pinions tried,  
That all that I had ever seen before  
Had never reached to admiration's flight,  
Nor shown a face so like to God in sight.  
That angel who descended once at first,  
Sang "*Ave, Maria, gratia plena ;*"  
His wings to her unfolded then with awe.

I heard, responding to the song divine,  
Around the voices of the happy court,  
Till every face I saw serener for 't.  
“O holy father ! who for me wert pleased  
To come below, and leave the pleasant spot  
In which thou sitt'st by thine eternal lot ;  
Who is that angel with such joyous mirth,  
Who looks on eyes of queen, who can aspire—  
Enamoured so, that he appears of fire ?”  
To doctrine taught again I had recourse,  
Of him Maria's eyes embellish far,  
As do the rays of sun the morning star :  
And he—“ All boldness and genteelness meet,  
Beyond a spirit's or an angel's grace,  
In him : 'tis meet that this should be the case,  
For he it was who carried down the palm  
To Mary, when it pleased the Son of God  
To take upon him this terrestrial load.  
But come now, with thine eyes (and as I go  
And talk the while) remark the nobles great  
Of empire, and of just and pious state.  
These two, in more felicity on high,  
Because the nearest to Augusta's side,  
Like the two roots this rose have amplified.  
He who approaches on the left-hand side,  
The parent is, through whose audacious taste  
The human kind such bitter came to taste ;  
And, on the right, the ancient father see  
Of holy church, to whom Christ gave the keys  
Of flower, the loveliest which the garden sees :  
And he who saw, before he died, the times

Of grief and sorrow lovely bride assail,  
Once won so gloriously with lance and nail,  
Sits far from him ; and, far on other side,  
That leader who the race on manna fed,  
Th' ungrateful, fickle, stiffnecked people led.  
Over 'gainst Peter, see where Anna sits,  
And so content to see her daughter's face,  
With eye unmoved, hosanna sings in praise.  
To greatest father of the family  
Lucia looks, who called thy lady's aid,  
On ruin's brink when eyebrows overweighed.  
But since time flies, to wrap thee in repose  
Let 's stop ; like tailor good, who can cut down,  
According to the cloth who makes the gown :  
Our eyes direct we to the primal love ;  
So that His light as far you may achieve  
As human eye can possibly perceive.  
In truth, lest haply you should fall behind,  
Moving thy wings, and thinking you advance,  
By prayer you needs must seek for grace at once—  
Such grace from her who can assist thee well :  
And see you follow me with all your heart ;  
From what I say let not affection part.”  
And then this sacred prayer the sage began.

## CANTO XXXIII.

“VIRGIN and mother!—daughter of thy Son!—  
Humblest and loftiest of the creatures made!—  
The boundary by the eternal counsel weighed!  
Thou art the one who human nature so  
Ennoblest, that thy Maker did not scorn  
Of thee, Himself creating, to be born;  
For in thy womb he kindled love anew,  
Through heat which germinates where finds increase  
This flower that blossoms to eternal peace:  
To us meridian torch of charity  
Above; and to the mortals here below,  
Hope from whose fountain living waters flow.  
Lady! so great thou art, and of such worth,  
Who, wanting grace, to thee his suit not brings,  
Has sure desire to fly, but wanting wings.  
And thy benignity not only lends  
To him who asks, but, ere request be sent,  
The asker’s wish will liberally prevent;  
For mercy, piety, reside in thee—  
In thee magnificence—in thee abound  
Whate’er of goodness in the creature’s found.  
This, then, is one who from the level sea  
Of universe to this has come, to view  
The spirits one by one who life renew;  
Makes supplication to thee for the grace  
Of virtue, such that he may lift his eyes  
More high to where the last salvation lies.

And I, who more have never burned to see,  
Myself, than now I do for him, would pray,  
And more than once, that thou wouldst not deny,  
That every cloud from him thou wouldst dissolve  
Mortality that dims, with prayers of thine  
That bliss supreme unveil itself and shine.  
I pray thee also, Queen ! who hast the power  
To do thy pleasure, after such a round,  
To keep his heart and his affections sound,  
That thou may'st guard, the movements human quell.  
Lo ! Beatrice, with all the saints above,  
Their hands in token of approval move.”  
The eyes which were by God beloved, revered,  
Fixed on the speaker, chased away each doubt,  
And showed how dear are prayers of the devout ;  
And then directed towards the eternal light,  
Where who can think an eye approached more near,  
Created only, with more vision clear.  
And I, who to the end of all desires  
Approaching was, within me then there died  
The ardour of desire, no more denied.  
Bernardo beckonèd me then and smiled,  
That I should look on high ; but, ere he signed,  
Had I myself looked up as he designed :  
For vision in me, as it grew sincere,  
It entered more and more into the ray  
Of lofty light, which never can betray.  
Henceforward, what I saw was far beyond  
Our speech, which fails before a view like that,  
Where memory yields, and finds its science naught.  
Like him who has a dream in sleep, and sees,

And after sleep the passion still remains,  
And nothing else th' awakened mind contains,  
Such too am I ; and all the vision ceased,  
As 'twere ; but in my heart I feel distil  
The sweetness born from it, and inly swell.  
So melts the snow before the mid-day sun,  
So scattered to the winds in leaves, dispersed  
And lost, the sentence which the sibyl nursed.  
O light supreme ! exalted far above  
All mortal fancies, to my longing mind  
Bring back a part of what my eyes enshrined ;  
And give my language but the power to make  
One spark alone thy glory from to fall,  
And leave to future ages as my all :  
Should it return to memory, the least,  
The faintest echo in this verse may be  
Th' awakening sound to tell thy victory.  
Th' acuteness I believe I then endured  
In living ray, would have bewildered sense,  
A moment had mine eyes withdrawn from thence.  
And I remember I was more alert  
From this to endure the light ; and blended mine,  
My sight, with value infinite divine.  
O grace abundant ! did I not presume  
To fix my gaze upon the light eterne  
So far, to make that sight consume and burn ;  
And in its depth I saw contained within,  
And bound with love, in single volume full,  
Whate'er the universe is seen to fill :  
Substance and accident, their manners all  
Conflated in themselves in such a mode,

To form a light both simple, unalloyed.  
The universal knot this form partook,  
I think I saw ; for now my heart's enlarged,  
Ev'n while I speak, and with fresh joy o'ercharged :  
To wait a moment seems lethargic sleep,  
Like five-and-twenty ages from the trip  
When Neptune saw the shade of Argos' ship.  
Such was my state of mind, in deep suspense,  
Which fixed in gaze immovable, intent,  
And ever kindling, with the gaze, content.  
To such a light as that I so became,  
To turn from it to any other one  
I thought impossible—could ne'er be done.  
There the loved object all the good it has  
Combines in one, beyond which favoured bound  
Whate'er is perfect is defective found.  
And now must I a shorter story tell,  
Than infant's tongue, whose wrongs are now redressed,  
That's moistening only at the mother's breast.  
'Twas not that more than simple countenance shone  
In living light, to which my wishes soar—  
Which ever is as it was seen before ;  
But through my sight, which first invigor'd grew,  
From thus beholding this appearance one,  
Still changing then, with changes was foredone.  
In the profound and clear consistency  
Of the light sublime appeared there circles three,  
Tricoloured, and in one contained to be ;  
And one from one, like rainbow from its type,  
Appeared reflected ; and the third seemed fire,  
And here and there on either side t' aspire.

But oh how short is speech ! and oh how weak  
To my conception this, to what I saw !—  
So little, that the word presents a flaw.  
Eternal light ! and dwelling but in thee—  
Perceiving thee—perceived by thee alone—  
And thus perceiving, lovest and smilest in one !  
That circling light, imagined and beheld,  
Appeared in thee but as reflected light,  
In part encompassed with my feeble sight.  
Within itself, in its own colours dressed,  
Appeared the picture of our likeness drawn,  
And all my gaze was fixed on it alone.  
Geometrician thus himself applies  
To measure circle, finds not how to speed,  
For ever thinking whence he should proceed ;  
And such was I to see that novel sight,  
So fain to trace the circumstance complete,  
And see the image in the circle meet.  
But not enough the wings I had for this,  
Had not my mind been at the moment struck  
With lightning flash, and so its will o'ertook.  
But still desire rolled on to do, to will,  
As rolls an even wheel, that ne'er stands still,  
The love that moves the sun and other stars.

THE END.













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